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Christ gave us the bread and wine of life,
With His still unpiercèd hands ;
Then went to Calv'ry and back again,
And told us to ' feed His Lambs.'

We gathered some lambs from the wilderness
And carried out His commands—
To give them the bread and wine of life
Received from His sacred hands.

He stood in the midst of that gathered flock,
And soon, as in days of old,
They pressed to His side : and with tender hands
He welcomed them to His fold.

M. H.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

A STORY OF INDIAN GIRLS

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL MATILDA HATCHER



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INTRODUCTION

THE caste system of India is still a formidable unsolved problem. There is nothing like it outside of India. Caste is purely a matter of birth. A boy is a Brahman if he is born one. He may be poor, as he often is, or he may be rich ; but unless he breaks caste he is always a Brahman. It is the same with every other caste down through all the grades to where caste ends and outcaste begins ; and there are iron-bound customs among the outcaste in as great variety as those of the caste people. Speaking generally, the majority of Indian people are only interested in the doings of their own particular caste, and those other castes without whose help life could not be lived. For instance, merchants are a caste by themselves, with some outside interest. They are interested in the agricultural caste, who supply the grain for the grain-merchant to sell, and in the weaving caste, who supply the cloth-merchants with goods. But with the social life of the agriculturist, or the weaver, the merchant has nothing to do ; it would never occur to him to concern himself with their affairs. This unconcern of one caste about the social life of

others is the general attitude of mind of all castes in India.

If, in an English agricultural district, we climb to a high hill and look down, we see a great many fields of all sizes, divided by hedges and ridges, producing different crops of varying value. If we wish to get a true view of India, we must look at her in the same way. Into this great peninsula, with its millions of people in uncountable divisions, there came less than two centuries ago earnest missionaries of Jesus Christ. They did not find India a land altogether without the Light. If the Apostle Thomas did not carry the Gospel to India (though tradition says he did), it is certain that as early as the first century the Truth reached her people, and a flourishing church sprang up in the extreme South. But, alas, after a few centuries it stagnated, and became a caste, living within itself, adding to its numbers by birth, seldom by conversion. Apart from that one small corner, India was still untouched by the Gospel even in the days of the Wesleys. Now, however, although the caste problem is by no means solved, and the dividing hedges and ridges still remain, if we lift up our eyes and look we see that every field is disturbed. Some seeds of the Gospel have taken root in the hardest soil; here and there golden ears of corn have sprung up and multiplied, and small and large harvests are being reaped out of every caste.

The last forty years have been a time of marvellous sowing, reaping, and ingathering by

The Salvation Army in India, due in great measure to the noble sacrifices made by our Pioneer Officers, who threw aside every weight—pride of birth, and race, and colour—adopted the national customs, and garbed themselves in the manner of the people. With unlimited patience they set about the task of making India's millions look at Jesus Christ not as a Western Deity, but as the Saviour of the world.

With all its innumerable divisions of caste, religion, and language, India had one thing common to all, the sacred colour of the priests' robes. From Cape Cormorin to the Himalayas, indeed on to Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan, the saffron robes of the Hindu and Buddhist priests represented all of spiritual aspiration that the great soul of the East knew. Not that all who wore the saffron robe attained great heights of spirituality. They did not, as is easily seen by their written confessions down the centuries. But when, dressed in saffron robes, our Pioneer Officers began to proclaim :

Life is found alone in Jesus,
Only there 'tis offered thee ;
Offered without price or money,
'Tis the gift of God sent free,

a new chapter in the history of Christianity opened in India. Slowly the saffron robe came to stand for the well-known message, principles and practices of The Salvation Army, in thousands of villages, towns, and city bazaars.

About twenty years ago The Salvation Army carried the Flag of Calvary into a new field—

'Criminal *Castes*' the people were called; not that every one of the more than three millions registered as 'Criminal-caste' was a criminal; but just as a Brahman is a Brahman, and a carpenter a carpenter in India because he is born one, so a criminal is a criminal because the social system decrees that he must be so called, if he is born of that community. These criminals also are divided up into hundreds of small tribes, each with quite different customs and speaking a different language; they are to be found all over India. Despised by all, and despising one another, they have wandered about the country, settling nowhere for centuries. With no work and no homes, little was possible to them but a life of crime. Even so, many made some effort to live honestly. They made baskets and toys, but there was small chance of selling their wares, as the things they had touched could not be handled by high caste people. The British Government tried many and various means of helping them to settle down; but the circumstances of their birth had driven them into a wandering life, and they had grown to love the sport and excitement of living at the country's expense.

The problem of their management was also almost insoluble. No Indian capable of doing so would touch or live with them on account of their caste. At length the brilliant idea of asking The Salvation Army to undertake the work occurred to a high Government official. The day that saw all the negotiations finished,

and the first tribe gathered together in a settlement with two experienced Salvation Army Officers to love, and help, and teach them, was another of those great occasions—when age-old gates of brass and bars of iron were burst asunder, opening up opportunities for seeking the treasures of darkness in a new field, the field of ‘The Criminal Tribes.’

Among the first of the so-called criminal tribes which came under the care of The Salvation Army were some children who were orphans, and others who had both parents in prison.

To two English women fell the great honour and privilege of taking charge of these young ‘Untouchables’ in the first Home to be established for them by The Army. The following pages are a record of the work accomplished in their hearts and lives.

CHAPTER I

UNDER THE NEEM TREE

'WHAT kind of children will they be?' asked the English women, one of the other.

The elder of the two—spoken of in these pages as 'The Mother'—had had much experience of children. One of the eldest of a large family, she had never been anywhere where a crowd of young people had not constantly engaged her willing attention. The younger Officer, here called 'Bai'—a sweet word, meaning Elder Sister—was still full of the romp and romance of youth. From different points of view, they were both anxious about their new responsibility. But not long did they remain in any doubt as to what the responsibility involved.

The first little group arrived. Terrified at first to come near the Englishwomen, they ran away and hid in the oddest corners, until the sight of pretty clothes, the constant aroma of nice food, and the explanations made to them by the little five-year-old son of an Indian Officer, induced them to venture near their new friends, and find them quite harmless. They soon proved quite normal happy little people, just bubbling over with wit and humour.

Many of the children came with the prettiest possible names. There was Gulabi, which, being translated, means Rose, and others meaning Jessamine, Pearl, Peace, Moon, Star, Sunshine, Golden, and the like. But there were other names that were horrible—names

of impure gods, names that inferred evil practices and many undesirable ideas. These names had to be changed and forgotten as soon as possible, and, like children everywhere, the girls liked new and unusual things. They asked to be given English names, so that, mixed up with the old pretty names, there were Mary, Miriam, Florence, Elizabeth, Sophy, Winnie, and others.

The smallest girl was about five years of age, as pretty and attractive as a wild flower. A picture on the wall (much loved by the children after they had heard its story) showed Mary with the Baby Jesus in her arms. When the children were choosing their names this little one, sitting on the Officer's lap, looked up at the picture and asked to be given the name of the Baby shown there. The Officer explained to her that, while He would be pleased later if she could truly be called a Christian, she could not now be called 'Jesus.' 'Then,' she replied, looking up with intense dark eyes, 'I will have His mother's name.' And so she was called Mary.

Just inside the big compound was a very large shady neem tree. Here the children gathered three times a day to eat their food ; or at intervals for little informal talks with the Officers and teachers ; or for physical drill and fire drill ; or for clothes inspection, discipline, and numberless other events, including morning and evening prayers. Squirrels, parrots, minas, owls, crows, bul-buls, starlings, wood-peckers, wag-tails, tailor-birds, sparrows, canaries and many other small birds built their nests undisturbed in the wide, thick branches overhead, and were a constant source of pleasure to the children.

As they gathered beneath the tree one evening, some one asked Mary what had caused a rather ugly mark on her arm. 'Oh,' she laughed, 'it is where a monkey bit me.'

‘A monkey?’ exclaimed a bigger girl.

‘Yes, there was a baby monkey, and it was so sweet that I tried to pick it up, and the mother was so angry she flew at me and bit me,’ said Mary.

She had learned painfully, through her daring spirit, what most Indian girls know by instinct, that a monkey mother will never let her baby go farther than arm’s length from her, and that it is unsafe to try to touch her baby.

‘Were there many monkeys where you lived?’ some one asked.

‘Yes, lots,’ put in a bigger girl who had come in the same party as Mary, ‘and they were great fun when they did not steal our food. But the goats were best, we could do what we liked with them.’

‘And the sheep with tails like fans,’ added another girl.

‘Where are there sheep with tails like *fans*?’ asked the wondering Officer.

‘Oh, in the Punjab the sheep have tails just like the kitchen fan,’ explained the girl.

The kitchen fan, big and square, was used to blow up the charcoal fires. ‘Funny shape for a sheep’s tail!’ thought the Officer, but she had already learned that if she had much to teach the girls, they also knew many things that she did not, so she made no further remark.

‘Why do we not have goats here?’ a girl asked.

‘We could not have a tree or a flower of any kind if we had goats,’ replied the Officer.

‘That is true,’ the girls agreed, ‘goats are like locusts, and eat up everything, even our clothes; but they give a lot of milk; without goats we should not have had milk, no one would have sold us any.’

‘Where did you get food for the goats?’ asked the Officer.

A smile rippled over every face, while a girl replied : ' Anywhere we could find it without being seen by the police, or other people ; we mostly fed them at night.'

' Didn't we love our baby camel ?' said a girl reminiscently.

' Oh, yes !' replied a chorus of voices, ' what fine games we had with him !' And they all laughed heartily at the memory of the camel's antics.

' Where did you get the baby camel ?' asked the Officer.

' He was in the road when we passed by, and the men covered him up with their clothes, and some bushes, and we took him along.'

' I wonder the police did not come after you,' remarked a teacher.

' I expect they did, but we were over the border into a native state before the British Indian Police could catch us,' said a girl triumphantly.

Delightful children ! They had enjoyed their wandering life : had been petted, loved and spoiled by their parents and relations. How were they to be taught that to steal was sin ? The word ' sin,' as they used it, meant ' fault' ; being in fault meant not being clever enough to get sufficient of other people's goods to live on without being found out. Whenever they had prayed, it had been to an evil spirit ; and they prayed not with any expectation of being delivered from sin, but for help and success in doing things about which other people got angry, and for which they would be punished if caught.

The conversation came to an end when a bell rang, and other children, big and little, came from different directions to gather under the tree for evening prayers.

The moon was shining brilliantly. Even the noisy ^{the} minas, last of all the birds to go to bed, were tucking their heads under their wings, chirping sleepily the

while. Jackals outside the walls were beginning to bark their evening greeting to one another, as the children sang in their native tongue the three verses of :

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me.

‘Let my sins be all forgiven.’ Sins? Would the true meaning of the word ever be conveyed to their minds and hearts? ‘Holy Spirit,’ prayed the Officer earnestly, ‘Let there be light! Oh, shed Thy light in the hearts of these beautiful children!’

When the song was finished, the children, taught by the Officer, prayed all together, their lips uttering words and framing sentences as greatly in contrast to any they had ever spoken before coming to this Home, as is the first pure snow against the black ridges of the Himalayas.

Quietly they dispersed and went to their dormitories, while the Officers and teachers retired to their own rooms.

An hour later, a big girl tempestuously burst into the room of the Officer-in-Charge.

‘Mother,’ she exclaimed, ‘please come and look at Mary—*she—is—the—naughtiest—girl*. You saw them after I had tucked them all up; now come and see.’

The School Mother went with the big girl to the nursery, where ten little people between the ages of two and five slept on separate little low beds. She had left them half an hour before as snug and comfortable as possible, each one covered with a warm blanket, a necessity for that season. Now the sleeping occupants of nine little beds lay shivering without a blanket; five-year-old Mary perspired in a tumbled heap of ten!

‘She must have felt cold,’ remarked the Mother, evading any reference to naughtiness.

‘She did it just to let them see she *could* do it,’ remarked the big girl emphatically.

One by one the blankets were replaced over their

rightful owners, and safety—pinned on to the mattresses ; Mary was carried, bed and bedding, to the Mother's room. During all this time she had feigned to be sound asleep, though no one had been deceived into believing she was !

The next morning, while the Mother was having her early cup of tea, Mary sat up and began rubbing her sleepy little eyes open.


'How does it happen that you're sleeping in my room, Mary ?'

'What punishment shall I get ?' asked Mary, looking quizzically between her fingers at the Mother.

'I shall not punish you, but I shall put you to sleep where you cannot do the same thing again. It was a very unkind thing to do. I am sure Jesus never did such a thing when He was a little boy,' said the Mother.

'Did you, when you were a little girl ?' asked Mary.

'No, I never did,' was the reply. The Mother was very glad she *could* say 'I never did,' for she was realizing keenly that all her ingenuity would be taxed in learning how to train and teach these nimble-witted children the difference between righteousness and sin.



CHAPTER II

THE DAILY ROUND

THERE was no difficulty in getting the children up in the morning. The caw of the first crow was always followed by their voices somewhere in the compound, mingled with the chirping of birds in the tree. In the next ten minutes an observant person could see many of the birds and all the children flying to the nearest pool or bucket of water for the same purpose—the cleansing of the mouth. Some birds, according to their species, would stop and have a bath and clean themselves, after attending to their mouths. These were the dainty canaries, the bul-buls, the tailor birds, the dish-washers, and their companions; the crows, minas, starlings and their friends paid no attention to their toilet, but went off at once in search of food.

While the owls and bats came home to sleep for the day, the children gathered under the tree for a song and prayer of thanksgiving, then separated to attend to their various duties. These were sweeping, mud-washing, grinding, cooking, drawing water. But as ‘many hands make light work,’ the tasks were very easy.

Mud-washing is a task peculiar to India. There are no stones on the plains in Northern India; people who need stones have to bring them from the hills, at great trouble and expense. The whole great plain is mud during the four months’ rain, and fine dust during the eight months’ dry season. Little imagination is needed to picture the state of the paths and grassless playgrounds

if left unattended, with dozens of little feet running about on them from morning till night. But both paths and playgrounds are easily made clean, almost dustless, by mud-washing. A pail is filled, half with dust and half with water; then with an old cloth, the mixture is washed all over the ground surface. It dries hard, and lasts for a couple of days, then has to be applied again. Few are the children of any nationality who do not love playing with mud; it is the work *par excellence* in the Indian girls' estimation of the day's time-table.

An hour later saw all the girls, with faces washed, and hair combed, plate and cup in hand, ready to sit down to the first meal of the day—a plate of porridge and a drink of water; or a chappati (unleavened cake), and a cup of tea, according to the season of the year. Another interval, and then the bell rang for school.

School began with singing, prayers, and a Bible lesson; that hour was the most sacred hour of all the twenty-four; to preparing for it the Mother gave more care than to any other need that had a claim upon her time.

School being finished by eleven, with a wild war-whoop the children came out of the classroom, and ran to their dormitories for clean clothes. Then followed one of the jolliest hours of the day. Every child bathed, and washed the clothes she took off, and put on clean ones of yesterday's washing. The wet things were laid on the grass to dry. The children were now ready for the midday meal of rice and curry, chappatis and curry, peas and oil, rice and lentils, or whatever the season offered.

Dinner over, for one and a half or two and a half hours—according to the time of the year—perfect quiet and rest was the order for all. Without doubt this was the hardest period of the day for most of these active, high-spirited children.

The next bell summoned all to the workroom, where

various occupations awaited them—silk-reeling, bead-work, drawn-thread work, embroidery, and plain sewing, with different teachers for the different crafts. A Malayala master had charge of the silk, and his was no easy task. The girls could handle and reel silk quite well ; but to *sit* still, and yet keep their feet and hands moving,* was one of the new experiences that tried them hardly.

Any excuse whatever for jumping up or getting leave to stop was eagerly employed, and if no excuse could be found one had to be invented.

No such worn-out plea as ‘ headache ’ or ‘ pain in the chest ’ ever occurred to these ingenious girls. A swollen finger could be most easily conjured up, and even made to look painfully like a whitlow ! A temperature up to 100 and above, could be quickly and mysteriously produced. Then the way in which the best-working machines would suddenly cease, and defeat the master’s utmost efforts to set them going, was something akin to a miracle.

The machine-trick, however, was the soonest overcome. The master, himself an Indian, understood the girls. When out-witted and unable to restart the machine, he maintained his dignity by taking things coolly and saying to the culprit, ‘ Just sit still by your machine and clean waste, until I can attend to you.’

In silk-reeling, the silk that comes first off the cocoon, before the clean, unbroken, thread is reached, is called ‘ waste ’; really it is a very valuable product, which eventually gets made into what is known as tussore silk. Having been taken off the cocoon first, it lies in little heaps on the machines, and has to be cleaned as part of the afternoon’s work, after the thread-silk is all reeled. Each girl was expected to do her own ‘ waste ’

* The foot action of a reeling machine is the same as that of a sewing machine.

cleaning—rather tiresome work—and certainly the least interesting of all phases of the industry.

Upon the disabled machines the master, at intervals, laid little heaps of waste, and kept this up for whole afternoons, till the girls realized what was happening.

Then suddenly every single machine went out of action !

‘Oh,’ exclaimed the master complacently, ‘that’s fortunate. I’ve been waiting for an opportunity to turn all these old and broken cocoons into ‘waste’ ; I’ll do it now, and you can *all* clean it.’

Unknown to the girls, he had a sack of cocoons which rats had gnawed and spoiled during the railway journey from the silk farm to the Home. To their great consternation, they now saw the preparation of enough waste to occupy them for—as one of them screamed out—‘days, and *days*, and D—A—Y—S !’

‘Are we never going to reel any more, Master Jee ?’ they began to ask, after many days had passed.

‘Cannot be done ; all the machines are out of order !’ was the reply, as he methodically handed out more waste.

The worst of the waste-cleaning was that there was nothing to spoil or put out of order. More days passed. The master said, loud in the hearing of all, ‘I like this job ; it’s easier for me ; I’ll ask Mother to buy up all the spoiled cocoons she can get from anywhere.’

Next day every girl who had not a temperature of over 100, nursed a bad finger !

‘I don’t believe this is real fever,’ declared the Mother in a voice full of perplexity, to one of the teachers.

‘It is a strange thing,’ was the reply ; ‘they seem to get it just when there is something they don’t want to do ; but they have all got temperatures.’

‘I know,’ replied the Mother ; ‘I have just been taking them. Some are up to 103 ; but there was nothing the matter with them this morning.’

'Teacher Jee,' she continued, 'you stay about that dormitory, and if any of the temperatures rise, let me know ; if they don't, I think I will take no notice.'

She went to the workshop to see the girls who were rocking with the pain of bad discoloured fingers. Full of assumed pity and tenderness, she asked the master to heat a can of water for the purpose of dressing the fingers. Into the water was put a good handful of washing soda. A girl's finger was unbandaged. Gently but firmly, in spite of wriggings, and groanings, and even shrieks, the hand was held under the warm water. When it came out there was not a vestige of dark purple, or pale yellow colour, only a clean-looking rather swollen finger.

'Girls,' said the Mother, 'the game is up : you can have this water to wash your hands, and——'

'Master Jee,' she called, 'all these girls must clean a quarter of a pound of "waste" each before they leave the workroom. When they have finished I will come and see it,' and she left them to the new situation.

Whatever their faults, the girls were 'good sports.' If they won, they rejoiced ; if they lost, they lost without losing their sunshiny tempers. The 'finger' game was lost, and the girls smilingly set to work ; but the fever brigade was still in bed.

The Mother knew that it would have been as useless to ask the 'finger' girls how they had produced the swelling, as to inquire how their comrades 'temperatures' had been created ; loyalty was a virtue they understood, perhaps, better than any other.

'Just let their hearts be won for Jesus, and that loyalty sanctified, and something will happen in this compound,' soliloquized the Officer as she walked away.

The temperatures did not rise ; the girls were left to the teacher, who gave them drinks of water, and incidentally saw that they did not get anything else !

By evening the allotted task in the workshop was finished, temperatures were almost normal. A not unhappy group of girls, and a puzzled but triumphant staff went to bed and slept, to learn, many months later, the solution of the mystery.

Saturday, with its active, cheerful, cleaning up, extra washing of clothes, extra cooking, bathing, and hair washing, was a day of joy. Very seldom did a note of discord mar the music of merry voices, amid the rattling of buckets, the 'gur-gur-gur' of the grindstone, the clinking of cooking vessels being cleaned, and the tinkle of cymbals and lotahs being polished up for Sunday use.

To see, in the evening, the place as spick and span as it could be, was a source of real pride and satisfaction to all the girls. Certainly, they were not lazy; it was not to get out of work that they schemed and played tricks; but neither they nor their ancestors for centuries had ever done, save for very short periods, anything they did not like to do. Many a time justice had been thwarted because, in an unaccountable way, perhaps half a tribe suddenly developed fever, or some other sickness that postponed matters long enough for retribution to be diverted.

Tribal secrets were tribal secrets; a man or woman, a boy or girl, might be sent to prison for years, or even die, but they would retain the tribes' secret. So it was quite natural that the girls continued doing the things they had been used to doing.

Sunday in the Home was a real Sabbath day. The Officers often mused on what the angels must have thought as they looked down into the happy quietness of the Home Compound, surrounded as it was on all sides by ten to twenty miles of unenlightened darkness.

For they did not know of any other Christian within that radius. For nineteen years, however, an Indian

Canon of the English Church had come annually on an itinerating tour through the village. Year after year he had made great efforts to buy a house, or hire a piece of land, and had prayed unceasingly for an opening in the district. Then with a burden-breaking heart he watched the building of a huge, strong opium distillery.

‘Miss Sahiba,’ he remarked years afterwards, ‘when I saw that place finished, with the Devil apparently more firmly established in the district than ever, and the Lord still without so much as a ‘room in an inn,’ I almost lost my faith. But a little later I came and found The Salvation Army in possession of the same fine pile of buildings, with European missionaries, several teachers, and the children growing up under strong Christian influence, and I was humbled in the dust. I could only exclaim with the psalmist, ‘O Lord, how great are Thy works, and Thy thoughts how very deep.’

God had indeed brought a ‘vine out of Egypt,’ casting out the heathen; He had planted it, made room for it, and caused it to take deep root. That good Canon, like Daniel, had not known that ‘at the beginning of his supplication, the commandment had gone forth’—the very building he had watched going up with such a despairing heart was the answer to his prayers.

Had The Salvation Army set out to choose the place, and plan the rooms, none could have been more suitable than those of the building put up for an opium distillery, and thrown out of use when, in answer to other prayers, the vicious opium trade between India and China began to come to an end!

CHAPTER III

NURSERY INGENUITY

‘WHERE are you three going?’ said the Mother one day.

Mary, Pearl, and Peace, three of the Nursery children, with hands tightly clasped behind them were coming, talking and walking most casually, along the path leading to the big girls’ dormitory.

‘To see our big sisters,’ they replied.

‘Your big sisters are in school,’ said the Mother. During the little conversation Mary had walked on. Looking round, the Mother saw Mary’s hands were now *not* behind her. She let the other two pass on to the dormitory, and noted that they also immediately brought their hands to the front!

Quickly entering the dormitory from another side, the Mother was just in time to see three small pairs of hands dexterously hiding something away in a big girl’s bed.

‘Just wait a minute, and let me see what you have put there,’ she called out.

Three little people stood and faced her squarely. On turning up the blankets, she brought to view not less than half a pound of bright red chillies!

‘Where have they come from?’ asked the Mother.

‘There are no chillies in the nursery,’ replied Mary.

‘And there are none in your kitchen,’ added Peace.

‘But I think there have been some in your hands,’ said the Mother. Taking their hands she smelt them and said, ‘Yes, certainly, you have held chillies.’

'Our hands cannot find things our eyes cannot see,' said the quiet, demure little Pearl.

'And all the chillies are locked up,' remarked Peace.

'But your hands have held chillies,' said the Mother.

Each child solemnly smelt her hands, one after the other, and the three nodded their heads in agreement, as Mary said off-handedly, 'It does *smell* like chillies.'

'Hold up your frock,' said the Mother. She swept all the chillies into Mary's lap and marched the three unconcerned little ones back to the bungalow. Putting the chillies in a plate, she stood the children in a row and exclaimed, 'What am I to do with you?'

'Punish us!' said the three small voices.

'I shall not punish you; that will do you no good; you will forget, and go and do the same thing again.'

'Why did you get chillies for the big girls?' she continued. 'I give them enough chillies to cook with their food.'

No answer.

'Tell me, why did the big girls want these extra chillies?'

No answer.

'Don't you love me just a little?' asked the Mother.

'A very great deal,' came the quick reply.

'Then promise me you will not try to get any more chillies for the big girls.'

No reply.

'I shall punish the *big* girls. I shall not give them any chillies to cook with their food for one whole week.'

A long-drawn out 'O—o—oh!' was the reply to that statement.

'Now we'll pray,' said the Mother; and all four knelt down, and the three prayed after the Mother.

'Oh, our Saviour Jesus, look upon us, three naughty children; we are like little black crows that take things which are not their own and hide them away. We are

worse than the crows, because they cannot understand, and we children can. Please, Jesus, forgive us, and help us to begin being good. Amen.'

'Now you must stay here till I come and dismiss you,' the Mother told them.

She went in search of the silk master. There were in the nursery fifteen small people all under five years of age. Things talked about in that airy room could be overheard in the workshop, if one listened carefully.

'In a few minutes there is going to be a panchayat (council) in the nursery, and I want to know what is said,' the Mother told the silk master. 'You be doing something in the workshop, and listen, and let me know.' She went back and dismissed the trio.

An hour later the Master brought the following report of the 'council.'

'There is some connexion, not quite clear, between chillies and high temperatures. Mother is a very difficult person. She has found out about the fingers. Now she had taken all the chillies, and is not going to give any out for a week. She *thinks* the girls will not get any—but they will!'

There followed a counter-council of assistants and teachers who, at the end of their deliberations, decided that, unobtrusively, every nursery child must be kept under observation, even if, for the time being, the work suffered as a consequence.

Three days later the trio were again caught red-handed. The outside land assistant, while ostensibly sleeping under a tree at a little distance, saw them carry out their ingenious little escapade.

Indian store-rooms have double doors, which are fastened by a staple in the door beam, and a chain on the outer door. The chain is put up over the staple and padlocked; this secures the room from entrance under ordinary conditions. The three small descendants of

raiding tribes had discovered that, by pushing the inner door and pulling the outer one, digging with their hands meanwhile a deep hole in the dusty soil, there was just room enough for the smallest one to slide in under the door, take all that was wanted, and pass it to the two outside !

Fine little feasts the nursery rogues had been enjoying ! Molasses, garlic, coconut, salt, chillies, and other luxuries were all found on the little culprits when quickly, from behind, the landman laid hands on the two outside the door, while his foot kept the other one on the inside till the Mother arrived.

After that discovery the door was padlocked at the bottom as well as the top !

So the chilli supply was effectually cut off. Henceforth, when chillies were necessary for food, a teacher ground them, and added them to the other spices. *There were no more high temperatures !*

Happily, the season now made it possible for outside work—the kind the girls loved—to be put into full swing. Planting and watering mulberry trees, weeding and watering wheat and other fields kept them happily occupied. No silk reeling was attempted ; and a month passed without a naughty outburst of any kind. Under the tree one evening, a big girl remarked how good the nursery children had become !

‘ They have,’ agreed the Mother. ‘ But why ? Why are they not getting chillies for you, and taking one another’s plates, and pilfering from your boxes ? ’

‘ Because they cannot,’ replied one of the girls.

‘ Exactly,’ said the Mother ; ‘ but that is not goodness. It is only good-natured submission to greater strength. There are none of you really good yet.’

‘ O Mother,’ burst out several girls at once, ‘ and we have done our work without giving any trouble for a long time.’

‘I know, and I have been very pleased with you. But do you know why you have not given any trouble?’

The girls looked at her inquiringly, and the Mother continued, ‘You have not been asked to do one thing you do not like to do, and there have been teachers and Officers about you all the time to see that you do what you ought. It is like that in the nursery. The children have not been in the store-room because the door is now secure, and they have not been in your rooms biting the pretty buttons off your dresses because we have made it impossible for them to do so.

‘Girls,’ declared the Mother, ‘the teachers and Officers have been good, but you have not. You think it over.

‘To-morrow,’ she concluded cheerfully, ‘the Dr. Miss Sahiba will be here with her lantern, to give you a lesson on your bodies.’

The coming lantern service had been the topic of conversation for many days. The children had been told that the Dr. Miss Sahiba knew more about the inside of their bodies than they did about the inside of their reading books.

‘Does she know how many bones we have?’ they asked.

‘Yes, and nearly how many drops of blood you have,’ was the reply. ‘At least she knows the colour of your blood.’

‘Blood is all red,’ exclaimed a girl.

‘Is it? You wait and see; the doctor will tell you just how your food makes blood, and how it keeps you alive, and what happens when you eat too many chillies.’

‘Ugh—chillies! Does she know what happens when we do not get enough?’ groaned a girl, greatly displeased over the strict ration of chillies.

The next day the Dr. Miss Sahiba arrived. The lantern sheet was hung under the tree, and the bright

acetylene light caused pandemonium in the bird colony in the branches above. The fledgelings woke up, and thinking it was morning demanded breakfast; the parents flew off, only to be utterly bewildered by the darkness beyond the narrow beams of light. They alighted here and there on the small mulberry and other shrubs, looking most dismal and unhappy. The distress of the birds, and of the children on the birds' account, made it necessary to move the sheet, and turn the light off the big tree. Immediately the fledgelings became more distressed than before, and were loud in their demands for their parents' return. The parent birds flew back and, vexed at having been disturbed, eased their own heart beatings by noisily chirping their complaints to one another, till Mother Nature kindly soothed them all to sleep once more.

Meantime the children were getting excited over the pictures. Assisted by the Dr. Miss Sahiba's pointer, they counted their bones, feeling for them in their own bodies. Most of the girls, however, were too solidly covered with good hard flesh to be able to feel their bones easily; the few thin ones were in great demand as 'skeletons.' Red and white corpuscles were explained, and also how the white corpuscles ate up germs.

'Now what would have happened,' remarked the Mother, 'if, when you sent all those germs into your bodies to make me think you had bad fingers and fever, the white corpuscles had not been strong enough to eat them all up?'

'Oh, this is what would have happened,' said the Dr. Miss Sahiba. And she put on a picture showing the germs overpowering the white corpuscles. Then the girl in the picture died of fever, and Jesus came and took her by the hand. The story was told so beautifully by the doctor that the children's hearts were drawn out in real love for the Saviour.

The next slide was partly a song, and the children rose and sang :

There is a Green Hill far away.

While they sang their eyes saw a picture of the Green Hill, with a cross on one side, and on the other side Jesus unlocking the gate of Heaven to let in a group of children of all climes who were gathered around Him.

Half an hour later, the only sound in the compound was the hooting of owls, flying about in search of their nightly food.

Not yet, however, had the meaning of the work done on the Green Hill dawned on the children's dark hearts. When would they see it ? .

CHAPTER IV

A CONFLICT AND A VICTORY

Just over two years had passed. United Meetings on Sundays, Bible lessons every weekday morning, informal talks under the trees preceding evening prayers had been made most of. The Ten Commandments, other portions of Scripture, many songs, choruses and prayers, had been memorized, but not a conversion had been registered among the girls. Easter began to draw near.

‘Let us have a Spiritual Day on Good Friday,’ said the Mother to her staff, ‘and see if we cannot get some of them really saved.’

‘Yes,’ agreed the English Assistant, whose love for the girls was as beautiful, real and true as that of a devoted elder sister. It was by the affectionate name of ‘Burri Bai’ (Big Sister), that the girls always called her. To Burri Bai they invariably went when in difficulties with their teachers, or over lost clothes or books. Somehow, Burri Bai always contrived to ‘save their faces’ without in any way giving away a principle. Garments irretrievably destroyed by white ants through having been left out when they should have been taken in, got replaced in impromptu sewing classes out of several pieces cut from other girls’ saris.* They were always willingly given because who knew when the giver might not be in the same need? For lost books

* Sari: the 6 to 10 yards of muslin or silk with which Indian women drape themselves.

new ones were bought during shopping expeditions, on condition that they were paid for out of some little general self-denial. Yes, Burri Bai was, as her name implied, a comforting person, a real peace-maker, and the love she poured out was returned in full measure.

'They are beginning to understand now,' she agreed, 'and are trying to be good.'

'I wish I *could* find out why those best big girls are always slipping in and out of our room when we are not there,' she added.

'Yes, I wonder,' said the Mother, 'I have never missed so much as a pencil.'

'Nor have I, but they must have some reason for going in and out; they don't go anywhere for nothing,' said Burri Bai.

The girls were naturally so full of tricks that those responsible had learned to be on the look-out for a motive for every action.

'You will find your room full of frogs, or your beds full of beetles one of these nights,' said a teacher in an aggrieved voice; 'I am getting tired of it.'

(She was a good teacher, and really patient in school; but among these girls it was useless for any one to try to put on airs as she did. The daughter of Christian parents, her grandparents had been Chamars (Tanners, a very despised caste), and there was not a girl in the Home but considered herself equal to, if not above, a Chamar. Out of school they always found a way of letting her superiority down with a jolt.

Their last escapade with her had been to soak thoroughly several sacks, take them up on the roof about an hour after she was soundly asleep, very silently remove a tile, and put the sacks just where a drip-drip-drip would fall upon the teacher's nice clean bed. By the time it woke her up the bed was cold, wet, and dirty; alone she had to pull it to another part of the room,

rearrange it, and put a pail to catch the drips. The dripping ceased about 4 a.m. when, with cat-like tread, the girls had again crept along the roof, removed the sacks and replaced the tile. No one had then known why the water came through the roof. Later in the day, when the mason went up to investigate the cause, there was not a vestige of evidence.)

‘We must get them saved,’ said the Mother. ‘Let us give ourselves to prayer without ceasing from now till Good Friday.’ A very earnest hour of intercession followed, and the staff dispersed, determined to continue in prayer till the anniversary of the Saviour’s death.

Some time during that night—whether while sleeping or waking the Mother was never quite sure—the reason for the girls’ surreptitious visits to her room was revealed to her. For some time they had been taking great pride in their hair, and in making themselves look nice. They had greatly improved in appearance and manners, and were really taking care of their clothes—a cause of much satisfaction to the staff. They had not always done so. Ceaseless patience and forbearance had been needed to teach these wild, care-free children that clothes cost money, and could not be renewed week by week; that if heads were to be kept clean they must be combed and brushed daily.

Yet up till that midnight hour, it had never occurred to the Mother or any one on the staff that a *looking-glass* was a necessary adjunct to neatly-dressed hair, and carefully-arranged clothes!

‘I am going into town to-day,’ the Mother announced at breakfast next morning. She was soon receiving commissions from all the Staff for things they needed, and could not buy in the village.

Late in the evening she returned, bringing a large second-hand looking glass. The next morning the girls

found it hanging in a convenient place in the play-room—a room set apart for their own special use.

‘Girls, girls, quick, come and look!’ called the two who first discovered it. Soon a picturesque group of at least twenty girls, with the Mother and Bai behind them, were beholding themselves in the fine, big glass.

‘Are you pleased?’ asked the Mother.

A chorus of voices replied, ‘Sachbat! Beshakas!’ words that lose greatly in force when they are interpreted as meaning ‘Truly, truly,’ and ‘Of course.’

‘That’s right. I hope I shall not see you going into Bai’s room or mine again when we are not there,’ said the Mother.

‘There was no other place to see our hair,’ said a big girl, quite unconscious of the fact that she was settling a cause of wonder in the minds of two people!

The Staff Prayer Meetings continued; the Sunday before Good Friday arrived. What a Spiritual Day meant was explained to the girls. They were told that Good Friday, the anniversary of the death of Jesus, would be made a Spiritual Day, when all things pertaining to the body would be put aside, and the day given up to thinking of the things of the spirit.

‘Holy week?’ Never before nor since have the Officers of that Home lived through a week apparently as far removed from holy influences as that week before Easter.

On Monday morning three of the most promising girls were missing. How they got out and away could only be conjectured, since none of the others would give the least explanation. The police were informed, and it was left to them to find and bring back the missing ones. When the bell rang for evening prayers, the other girls assembled under the tree in a spirit of the wildest rebellion. They would neither listen nor sing, and were dismissed. A group of big girls then went and sat on the

well-edge and threatened to jump in. The silk master undertook to guard the well.

‘All this is happening because we told them we are praying that they may get saved,’ said a teacher.

‘It’s the powers of darkness in direct action,’ said the Mother, as a wild shriek came from the nursery and was followed by the whole nursery group running out and crying that a snake was in one of the beds. Very naturally, being a man, the silk master left the well to help in the snake hunt. While the hunt was in progress a sickening thud and splash brought a frightened trio of the Staff to the well, fearing that a girl had fulfilled her threat and jumped in.

The drag-hooks were fetched, and the master and the landman arriving, they began vigorously to drag the well. A few big girls sat themselves down at a little distance and began beating their breasts and tearing their hair, while they lifted up their voices and loudly wailed the death-wail.

Nothing was found in the nursery; but the little girls all appeared thoroughly frightened, and much time and patience was needed in persuading them to go back to bed.

The drag-hooks produced no result; and the village diver was called in. In a most business-like way he immediately dived to the bottom of the well and came up. An anxious, breathless staff saw he was holding the end of a girl’s sari which, when brought to the surface and untied, revealed a dozen bricks. The wails changed to shrieks of harsh, triumphant laughter.

Half the staff retired to bed. The other half walked about the Compound, or made tea and sat drinking it, while the girls sometimes wailed, sometimes threatened, and were more unreasonable than they had ever been before.

Lessons and industries were impossible the following

day. The girls were sulky, and would neither cook nor eat. A teacher made an attempt to cook for the nursery, and a big girl tipped the saucepan over and put the fire out. Hunger-striking made its appearance in the Home for the first time. These Indian girls could give points to any hunger-strikers. The big ones grew more and more unreasonable and unmanageable; the small ones had to be taken out to a field, where the teachers cooked the food, which they ate sullenly. In the evening, the three missing girls were brought back, looking the pictures of disconsolate misery. Another attempt at prayers was made, but without success; the girls all remaining as sullen as an unburst snow-cloud.

Without variation, things continued in this way till Good Friday morning dawned. At 5.30 a.m., the staff gathered for prayer, and prayed till 7 a.m. The bell was then rung for the first Meeting of the day. The usual time was allowed for the children to get in their places, and the staff went to the Meeting room.

Not a girl was in place.

'Of course I could go out and make them come in,' said the Mother, 'but that would be useless for our purpose. We must just pray through; let us pray.'

The little circle of six, two Englishwomen, two Hindustani women-teachers, the Patani nurse, and the Malayalam silk master, knelt down and began to wrestle with great longing for the souls of the girls. They prayed, and sang, and wept, and pleaded, one after another.

At last one looked up. There was a movement at the door. The girls had begun to dribble into the hall. One by one they came, and sat down beside the praying staff.

O Calvary! O Calvary!

It was for me that Jesus died
On the Cross of Calvary.

'For me, for me. Everybody say—*for me*,' exhorted the Mother. To her great joy, the girls repeated the words. Then one of the big girls who had run away burst into tears and exclaimed, 'Jesus died for *me*,' and began praying for herself. Other girls joined in, and before long fifty girls were praying all together for their individual selves. The Spirit of God had won—had got possession at last.

No one said to the girls, 'You must confess your sins.' It had never even been hinted; but voluntarily, without any promptings, the girls began to confess their sins. Then the Staff learned how the wet sacks got on the roof; how temperatures had been created, and many other things.

They had had a weary week. Very little sleep, if any, had the Mother obtained. Her crowning moment of joy came when a big girl, the girl who had put the bricks in the well, drew near, stroked her face, and said, 'Oh, you look so tired, and we know you have not been to sleep. But go to sleep now, we shall give you no more trouble.'

The Meeting came to a close, and the thankful Staff had hours of perfect rest of body and peace of mind.

The Meeting held later in the day was a Spiritual Meeting indeed; and that Good Friday evening closed with most of the big girls inside the Kingdom of God. The Devil had lost, and there was great rejoicing over the victory.

But a curious phenomenon was remarked upon. The nursery group had looked on, made comments freely, agreed that some of the big girls might be better tempered, hoped there would be peace again. Not one of the little ones themselves moved, or could be persuaded to move, towards the penitent-form!

CHAPTER V

A PIECE OF 'NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS'

THE difference in the spiritual atmosphere of the Compound next day was as the difference between a foggy English day in November and a glorious spring morning. There was a sweet new note in the children's singing, as the application to themselves of different thoughts expressed in the songs became clear.

Before, for example, they had not been able to realize the difference between what they knew as sacrifice and the sacrifice of Jesus. When some calamity had brooded over the tribe, such as an epidemic of sickness, trouble with the police, or famine scarcity, in a frenzy of fear they tried to turn the wrath of evil spirits away from themselves by making offerings, which they called sacrifices. That the animals they offered were often stolen mattered nothing; there was no sin in the act of stealing; they were in trouble and it was something to do. It might appease the evil spirits; in any case it relieved their feelings and kept up their courage till the evil had passed over. A sacrifice made out of love, to help the rich and poor, high-caste and low-caste alike, was far too great a wonder to be easily understood. But now as they sang:

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to Heaven,
Saved by His precious Blood,

rays of new light came to their minds, and new joy shone through their faces and sounded in their voices. They did not weep or mourn long over their past sins ; but their repentance was sincere and active.

Saturday and Easter Sunday were days of great joy. Like thirsty flowers the children drank in the teaching in the various Meetings held for them. The word ' confession ' was carefully avoided ; the Officer-in-Charge had long before warned the staff against its use. There was danger that the children might think a tribal secret, or some illegal knowledge—of which they had a great deal too much—was to be forced from them, and thus their coming to Jesus would be hindered. Often had she explained to her staff that when the Spirit of Truth came He would guide them into all truth. Now, the evidences of the Spirit's working in the children's hearts brought joy too deep for words, an experience no language could describe.

' To-morrow is a holiday,' said one of the girls, in the little talk that came after prayers.

' Yes, to-morrow is a holiday,' repeated the Mother, rather relieved, remembering the past week, with its long and anxious vigils.

' We did not work for five days ; we ought not to have a holiday,' said the girl.

' That is so ; but *we* worked rather hard,' said the Mother gently.

' Ah, it is the pitiful truth,' came in a chorus of sympathetic voices ; ' but we can finish this and finish that, clean the Compound and the workshop by ourselves, and we will not spoil anything. You all have your holiday ; but *we* ought to work.'

' Good resolves are best put into practice,' decided the Mother inwardly, and at once agreed to the suggestion.

Never did girls work more happily or contentedly than these newly-saved girls did the following day,

while Officers and teachers enjoyed the rest and quiet they sorely needed.

Before Easter the children had not been at all keen on book learning. They had been tiresomely indifferent to all efforts made by the teachers on their behalf. No woman they had ever known before could read or write, they argued ; what was the use of it ? In good moods they would sometimes try to gratify the teacher ; in other moods they gave her a trying time.

Their excellent memories were rather hindrances than helps. If it had not been so easy to memorize quickly and accurately they might have taken more pains to learn to read. As it was, a song lined out and sung three or four times became their own possession ; they could repeat it correctly at a moment's notice without the slightest effort, whereas learning to read it in a book was drudgery. It was now explained to them that Christians who could not read the Bible were at a great disadvantage ; no memorizing could make up for being unable to read God's Word for themselves. A promise of a Bible was made to any girl who could read the ' third reader ' easily and correctly.

It was a new incentive, and the school atmosphere changed completely. Eagerness chased away indifference, and girls could often be seen, book and slate in hand, sitting under mulberry trees, or on their dormitory doorstep, with wrinkled brows and earnest faces, mastering the up-and-down strokes that made books speak silently.

Compared with India's millions, this little group of ' untouchables ' was as a single tiny twig to a giant oak, and they might have been considered of no account to any one but themselves. The Devil did not think so. He fought for their souls, continually and insidiously. But in the face of constant defeat through inbred sin, and keen disappointment, they held on.

The children's garments, which had been made with as much colour, and as prettily as possible, had all been put in order, and the clothing of each little girl given into the keeping of a big girl, just before Easter.

'Listen to me, girls,' said the Mother, after she had distributed all the garments. 'I really intend to do what I am now saying; the first girl who after this loses either jacket, skirt or sari, will have all her clothes taken away, and be given a dress of sackcloth. Then when Commissioners, and Colonels, and other visitors come, they will ask, "Why has that girl got sackcloth on?" and we will tell them the reason, and they will know who are the careless ones.'

The expression on every face showed that not one girl believed the Mother to be serious; but she continued: 'You have all got one Sunday suit, two school suits, and one working suit, and the time has come when you must take care of your clothes, or have them taken away from you.'

Now it must be remembered that before they came to the Home, most of the children who were being addressed had never had any clothes to speak of. A pair of leaden bangles on their wrists and ankles, and a rag round their waists—sometimes!—till it fell to pieces, was all the apparel they ever wore. They had soon learned to like pretty clothes, and were always eager to have them; but it required persistent patience to teach them the proper use of their garments and also that they must be preserved.

Whoever heard of clothes needing to be taken in from the drying ground, and mended, and folded, and put into boxes? As if it were not quite sufficient to have washed them and put them on the grass to dry! Then, when the white ants had riddled them with holes—past redemption, the exclamation 'Mara bap!' (which

means 'Oh, my father!' and is what every child all over Northern and Western India says when she is surprised), was all any one ever heard about the destroyed clothing, until evidence indisputable proved that that child was wearing her last garment!

The Officers recognized that repeated small punishments were useless; the children had to learn, and time was ripe for some very desperate and lasting impression to be made—hence the Mother's threat.

A group of very merry little people trooped out of the schoolroom, and every garment was carefully put away. For a whole month no clothes were seen lying about. Then, alas! a jacket was missing. It was a little girl's. The older girl was called up for explanation. 'Bai,' she said, 'I did take care of Kripa's things. You make us all sleep in the leisure hour, and while I was sleeping she herself took the jacket, and now it is nowhere.'

The little girl was called. 'Yes,' she confessed, 'I went to Premdaya's box and took it.'

'What did you do with it?'

'I don't know. I have forgotten.'

'Very well, Kripa, now you will have to wear the sackcloth dress.'

Premdaya was told to bring all Kripa's other clothes. Out of an old sack from the grain room a long garment was made and, to the utter dismay and consternation of all the girls, this dress was put on Kripa and her other clothes put into the cupboard.

It was the time of the evening meal. The girls were already seated in a circle waiting to be served, when Kripa appeared in her robe of mourning. First—speechlessness, and any one acquainted with Indian girls will know that it takes a severe shock to produce speechlessness. Then one big girl jumped up and admonished the stupefied group. 'Go,' said she, 'go and search every box, every chatti, every cot, every

nook and corner of the house and Compound until that girl's jacket is found !'

A general stampede followed. Never was the Compound more thoroughly searched than during the next hour. But it was a fruitless effort. One by one the party returned unsuccessful, and sat down to dinner, now quite cold.

'Bai, Bai, how *can* we eat our food with our eyes on Kripa in *that* cloth ?' they said, and tears were freely flowing.

'Well,' said Bai, 'you know what Mother said, and I have carried out her order in her absence ; when she comes back think how sorry she will be !'

Every girl felt the disgrace as deeply as if she herself were clothed in sackcloth. But not for long could such a cheerless mood last.

The familiar chorus 'Count your blessings,' had become to all Indian Salvationists :

Share your blessings, share them day by day ;
Share your blessings all along life's way ;
Share your blessings, though you've only one,
And it will surprise you how much good you've done.

Just when it seemed as though they were all in the most dismal depths and never would recover, the 'pickle' of the school had a flash of humour. She began piping in a serio-comic voice :

Share your blessings

with a most determined accent on 'share' and 'blessings.' In a few minutes this had the happy effect of making even Kripa in the sackcloth smile, in spite of her very genuine sorrow. It is not to be supposed that the 'pickle' realized, or even thought, that she was sharing her blessing of humour !

A few days later the Mother returned, and had to hear the whole pitiful story and interview the wearer of the

sackcloth. Alas ! alas ! The Mother was to be followed in a few days by a Colonel, on a visit from far-away England, and a little later by a distinguished lady friend. That the visitors should see Kripa in the sackcloth was too dreadful to think about !

‘ It is this way,’ said the Mother, feeling that the lesson should be carried through, ‘ I cannot go back on my word and either give or make Kripa a new jacket ; but if you girls have any pice (farthings) and would like to put them together and buy material for her, and make a jacket yourselves, and make it properly, then she may have her other things back, and we will put the sackcloth dress in the cupboard for the next girl who loses a garment.’

There was a quick gathering-up of precious farthings. In all they amounted to fourpence, and with this small sum printed calico was bought, and a garment made.

So the visiting Colonel from England, and the distinguished lady, never saw Kripa in her sackcloth—nor did any other girl ever have to wear that loathed garment !

CHAPTER VI

A BREAK IN THE NURSERY

THE nursery children were the joy of the whole family. They were not angelic little beings, flitting here and there like harmless butterflies; all had their full share of original sin. There seemed no limit to their ingenuity in creating new mischief. But their very roguishness endeared them to the grown-ups, even to those who were often almost helpless with weariness through trying to direct the little people's overflowing energy into harmless channels.

'May I stay here and talk to you?' asked Mary, ring-leader of rogues, coming into the Mother's room one day.

'Sit down and look at this picture book, I am very busy,' said the Mother, handing out a coloured, illustrated 'Life of Jesus.'

'Thank you, Mother dear,' said the rogue, sitting down on the floor contentedly and beginning to look at the book from the wrong end.

The Mother went on with her writing for some time and forgot the child's presence. Then, looking round, she saw her working hard with a piece of cement she had picked from the wall, scratching out the eyes of the people in the pictures.

'Mary,' she exclaimed, 'what *are* you doing?'

'I won't let them look at Him any more! I won't, I won't! they shall never look at Him again,' burst out the child, her face aflame with indignant passion.

'What do you mean?' said the Mother, picking up the book and lifting the child on to her feet.

'Look! Look what they did to Jesus,' said the angry little voice, 'they put that thorn-ring on His head, and then these two great pieces of wood, and when He couldn't carry it, they . . . they' (she was sobbing now), 'pushed Him down. Look at Him, look!' and she stamped her little bare feet. Smiling triumphantly through her tears she added, 'I've put all their eyes out, every one of them.'

The Mother turned back a few pages and showed her a picture of Peter, and James, and John. By this time the nursery people were quite familiar with Bible pictures and stories—Mary knew quite well who the three men were.

'Listen, Mary!' said the Mother. 'Once Peter got very angry because the people were doing cruel things to Jesus, and he took a sword and cut off a man's ear.'

Mary began to look at Peter with very sympathetic interest while the Mother continued, 'But Jesus was *very sorry*, and He picked up the man's ear and put it on.'

'Then,' said the child of six, her little body swelling with admiration for Peter, 'if I had been Peter I would have cut off the other ear.'

'You desperate little descendant of a dozen generations of dacoits, what am I to do with you?' exclaimed the Mother, in a language of which, happily, the child understood not a word. She just looked up and asked intriguingly, 'Do you love Peter?'

'Yes, I do,' said the Mother, just as—to her great relief—the children's dinner bell rang. Mary ran off to join and tell the others the story, and if that little nursery tribe could just then have worked their will on the men who crucified Jesus, the inquisition tortures of the Middle Ages would have been mild compared with their treatment.

'One great gain,' said the Mother to herself, 'is that they are really beginning to love Jesus.' And she remembered that the children had heard more talk of torture and death in their few years than most Europeans hear in a whole lifetime.

It is a strict rule in Army Homes in India that no girl over six shall be beaten in any way. The small folk in the nursery did sometimes get laid across the Mother's knee, and received what she hoped would help them to remember oft-repeated and oft-ignored instructions. Never a tear was to be seen after such an incident! The small person would stand to her feet and salaam, saying solemnly, 'Thank you, Mother,' and quietly return to the nursery to sit still, *perhaps*, two minutes!

Six months after the eye-scratching episode, and some weeks after the Easter victory, the Mother was again writing in her office. Looking up, she saw Mary quietly standing before her with a grievously sad little face, and two huge tears just ready to fall. Such an unusual sight as tears made the Mother instantly drop her pen and take the child on her lap.

'Oh,' broke out the disturbed little soul, 'I have never spoken the truth all my life.'

'But,' said the Mother gently, not knowing what was on the child's mind, 'I have heard you say you were hungry, and that was true; and call Nishtani, and tell her our baby was crying, and that was true.'

'That,' said the child with great scorn, 'that came out by itself. I mean the things I think and then say. Take me into your room and talk to me.'

Happily the Mother gathered up the child in her arms, and took her into the inner room, where Mary had seen many big girls go for personal conversations; she now wanted the same kind of help. They knelt down together.

'What are you going to do with this naughty, untruthful heart?' asked the Mother.

‘ Oh, please, you pray,’ sobbed the broken-hearted little penitent.

The Mother prayed. Only Heaven understands how an Officer does pray on such occasions, when to her it has been given to lead a little dark soul into the Light. The soul is now seeking to walk in that Light, and the Officer must help the weak little feet to take the first step.

Lying flat on the floor, with her face resting on her folded arms, Mary sobbed piteously.

‘ Pray, little daughter, pray for yourself,’ said the Mother, with tender encouragement, sitting Indian fashion beside the child and gently making her kneel up. Dropping her small head on the Mother’s lap, Mary began to ask for forgiveness for a lot of naughtinesses, some of them quite unknown to the Mother ; showing how very clearly she understood the difference between real sin and the inconsequent nonsense of their daily fun. Then the child almost groaned out :

‘ Oh, one little drop of blood from Your face, where the thorns pricked it, put on my heart will drive all the evil away. I love You Jesus, I do, and I will never scratch out their eyes again if it does not please You.’

The Mother had not once mentioned again the spoiling of the pictures. She had taken the book to an artist ; no one else in the house knew about it. But as Mary rose up from her knees she looked up, her small face bathed in tears and exclaimed : ‘ It was a naughty thing I did in the book, but I did not spoil the face of Jesus, did I ? ’

‘ No, little daughter, and I have had the other eyes put back. So we will say no more about it,’ said the Mother.

The artist had done the work well, and when Mary was shown the restored pictures smiles chased away her tears. She soon ran off, a very happy little girl.

A leader she had always been, and a leader she

remained. Wonderful was the difference that the conversion of this one small child made, and how far her influence reached! No fewer than three big girls had always been needed to keep the fifteen nursery children under control, and it was often very weak control. But when Mary and Peace threw all the weight of their strong personalities on the side of obedience, it soon became possible to reduce the number of monitors to one big girl and a half-time schoolgirl.

A few days after Mary's deliberate surrender, Peace came and sat on the Mother's doorstep. Rocking herself to and fro, she exclaimed while big tears were falling, 'It will hurt too much, I know it will. I have been watching the landman pull up the couch-grass, and it's in hard; when he pulls it he tears up the earth and the rice—he *always* has to replant some rice.'

She looked the most pitifully distressed little person imaginable.

'What will hurt?' asked the Mother.

'My sins,' said Peace. 'The roots are all over me like the grass roots.'

'Come in and let us pray about it,' invited the Mother.

Peace—whose name had never, up till then, been expressive of her personality—allowed herself to be led into the inner room.

Kneeling down the Mother prayed and then urged Peace to pray. After a time of distressing weeping she prayed: 'Jesus, it will hurt, I know it will. It is all over the inside of me, lies—thieving—disobedience—bad talk. Oh, please pull it out, only don't let it hurt too much.'

A pause—then a radiant little person sprang up exclaiming: 'Oh, inside is not me, it's gone, all gone. Oh! oh! I am *good* inside now.' Without another word she bounded off and told the Nursery: 'He's taken it all away, and it did not hurt a bit.'

The following Sunday morning, several of the Nursery

group came out to the penitent-form. Most of them got saved—not all at that time. Kneeling beside small Moti, Bai asked, 'What did you come for, Moti?'

'Because Pearl told me to come.' She and Pearl were inseparable companions.

'Now you have come, you are going to pray and ask Jesus to give you a new heart, are you not?' said Bai.

'No! I don't want my heart changed; I want to go on doing all the things I like to do.'

'But I think Pearl wanted you to pray,' urged Bai.

'Well, she did not say that.' She said, 'Moti, you go out there, so I came.'

More counsel from Bai did not move Moti. It was six months later when, of her own accord, she went to the penitent-form and got truly saved.

'You had better send us all indoors,' said Mary one day to the landman, coming up to him as he stood knee-deep in water planting rice.

'I don't mind your being here,' he replied, without looking up.

'You soon will mind,' said Mary.

The man stood up, with one hand full of green rice plants. Shading his eyes with the other, he saw his choicest rice patch being trampled down, where the children were spreading their dolls' clothes to dry.

'Don't you know that is *rice*, not grass?' he burst out as he hastily moved towards them.

'I told you he would be angry,' said Mary, helping the others to run away quickly. But having got them to a safe place she returned with two little ones, and together they straightened up, as well as they could, all the down-trodden plants.

'One person in every eight is a born leader. Find that one, get him saved, and eight others are sure to follow him,' the Founder once told us in an Officers' Meeting.

CHAPTER VII

LOST RUFUSINA AND THE FROGS

I live on the walls of the School Mother's room, and get my living by catching insects, mosquitoes, and things of that sort. Sometimes I think the Mother's pen is a fly or a beetle, and I sit and watch it a long time. Then I see all the School Mother writes, and all she does after the lamp is lighted.

Once, nearly a year ago, there was a terrible racket and noise, and the Officers came into the room dragging and pushing a big box. They had a hammer and a broken chisel, and began to break their own nails instead of the nails in the box, but at last the lid fell off and I hoped some insects would come out, for it was winter, and flies were so scarce I had a hard time to live.

I watched closely, and out came things such as I had never seen before. There were a lot of tiny people dressed up so smartly, just a few like Salvation Army folk. Of course, I thought these Muktifauj, or Salvation people, were the Officers who had come to take care of the others. But they were all so funny; they never stood up, or spoke, or cried, or anything, and yet I knew they were not dead, because every time any one lifted one up it opened its eyes!—*The Mother's pet lizard.**

Those dolls, sent by an English Young People's Corps, were a great joy. For five days after the day on which they received them, the little ones had not been separated from their treasures day or night, except sometimes in the kindergarten class, when the dolls were made to sit in the corner because they were found where they ought not to have been.

When Sunday morning came, great consternation

* The lizard in India, a pretty quick little reptile, is so very useful in catching flies and beetles, and so harmless, that people are not afraid to have it living in their rooms.

arose, therefore, over the dolls being banned from the Meeting.

'Put them to bed for two hours,' suggested the Captain.

'Alone?' asked several little voices at once.

'Oh, they will sleep till you return,' she replied.

'*Bai!* The *Monkeys* will come and take them,' wailed the children.

That seemed quite probable, as there was no way of keeping the monkeys out of the Compound. While the terrier dog kept guard in one part of the house, the monkeys were likely to go and search the other part. One Sunday morning an Officer had lost her best red jacket. Days passed, and no trace of the missing jacket was found, till a visitor came and inquired why the Home people thought it necessary to hang their jackets on the tops of trees to dry! They went out, looked up and there from the highest tree in the Compound the lost red jacket floated in the breeze.

'Those monkeys again! Oh, there are too many monkeys,' they exclaimed. But because many Indians believe monkeys are sacred animals, no one can destroy or drive them far away, so they become very tame and often very tiresome.

'Put the dollies in Mother's room; the terrier will guard them,' suggested the Captain.

'Oh, no! He will play with them, and tear them. Besides the owls are there, and the dollies are afraid of owls.'

'Then put them in my room.'

'Oh, you have the kittens and Porki. Porki will prick them.'

Porki was a porcupine and a real pet. Any one of the hundred inhabitants of the Home could pick him up and nurse him. But if a stranger came near, out would fly his quills! A visiting Colonel, seeing Porki being

tumbled out of a child's lap on to the hard cement floor, went to pick him up. To his astonishment he got a few sharp digs in his hands from Porki's quills, after which he left him to his adopted friends.

The children knew perfectly well, however, that neither the Persian kittens nor Porki would have harmed the dolls. They were only making excuses because they longed to take them to the Meeting.

Just then the silk master popped his black curly head into the nursery and suggested that, the cocoon box being empty, the dolls could be put in there and locked up till after the Meetings.

'Go away, Master Jee, it is Sunday and you have no work ; put your keys away,' the children told him. But he was only teasing.

'No, I really came to say to Bai, Let the dolls go into the dolls' gallery in the Hall. I have made it all ready.'

Eyes sparkled at that, and many little hands laid hold of him. He took the children to the School Hall, where Meetings were held. Here, on a long wide shelf at the back, he had arranged books and slates to form a very nice gallery for dolls.

Quickly and happily the little girls arranged the dolls' company to their entire satisfaction.

Sunday by Sunday after that, the dolls were carried to the Meetings and put in their own place, while their little owners behaved quite nicely, sitting in front of the bigger girls.

Every week-day the children spent a few hours in the fields. The head fieldman was very kind, and let them help him ; which really means that he was good-natured enough to endure their hindering him very often. One day they planted a field of cabbage. He made the holes and the children put in the plants. Then they called it 'their cabbage field.'

In a few weeks they were walking in and out among

the plants, deciding which cabbages would be ready for cooking first. As they started for home, a wild shriek from Moon—who was generally as placid as her name—drew every one's attention to her.

'I've lost my Rufusina! I've lost my Rufusina!' she wailed.

The fieldman and his assistants, the other children, the Captain in charge, all began to hunt for the lost doll. They searched and searched, but nowhere could it be found. Mother was called, and came out with another Captain and the silk master; but the second search proved as useless as the first. The doll was lost, and its little owner inconsolable.

Much trouble was taken to make her a new doll. The sewing teacher cut one out and sewed it neatly; the silk master stuffed it with silk—a clever artist friend painted a face which was so like Moon's own that the other children looked at the doll and then at the small girl, and exclaimed over and over, 'Ajib ki bat!' (wonderful thing!)

Many weeks passed, and the vegetables began to ripen. One of the children's greatest pleasures was to go out and gather peas, or pull carrots and other roots, or bring in a cauliflower each, as one after the other the various vegetables grew ready for use. Almost last of all came the cabbages.

'This one will be cut first, it is the biggest,' exclaimed Moon, as the landman turned into the patch. But after feeling its heart he passed on, explaining that though it was big it was not hard all through.

More days passed. 'It seems as if this one will never get any better,' said the landman, as he felt the same cabbage, 'so we will have it as it is,' and he stooped to cut its stalk.

Strange! The knife came in contact with something which felt like a stone. He drew it out and cut lower

down. The cabbage fell off, and he turned it up to see what the knife had struck. A surprised look and a smile came over his kind face.

'Little sisters, little sisters!' he cried. 'Come here, all of you!'

They ran up to see why he was laughing. With one long slash of his knife he cut the cabbage right through, and there, looking very pretty in the pale green heart of the plant, was the lost Rufusina with her eyes fast closed and her hands grown right into the cabbage stalk!

Moon's face was a picture of wonder. *Then* she remembered! She had put her doll to sleep on the biggest plant, tucked the leaves over it for a covering, and forgotten all about it, till now she saw it again, asleep in the heart of the cabbage.

'What a lot of trouble we have all had because Moon forgot where she put Rufusina to sleep!' exclaimed the silk master. If Rufusina had spent three months in a cabbage in England, the rain would have spoiled her: but in North India during the season when cabbages grow it never rains; the plants are watered by irrigation, the water flowing only round the roots.

Moon was delighted to see her doll again. She ran at once to the Mother and said: 'Now I can give one doll to Pearl, who came last week.'

'That will be very nice,' said the Mother; 'which will you give?'

Moon looked first at one, then at the other, and exclaimed: 'I don't know!' Like all mothers she could not decide which child she loved the more.

'It's very difficult,' said the landman: 'but if *my* mother had put me to sleep in a cabbage and left me there three months, I don't think I should love my mother very much. You had better let Rufusina have a new mother.'

Without another word Moon handed Rufusina over to Pearl.

Only a few days later the same group sat one above the other on the workman's ladder, piping out at the highest pitch of their merry little voices :

Keep the music ringing all the way,
Do your work with gladness every day ;
Keep the music ringing (repeat)
Keep the music ringing all the way.

During their first lessons in swimming the silk master had dubbed the six of them 'frogs,' on account of their absurd resemblance to those lively little reptiles, as they had sat on the edge of the pond. The silk master swam in the most scientific fashion ; but no effort on his part could make these irrepressible six-year old girls learn anything but the 'frog-stroke.' They had discovered how to tumble, and splash, and chase the big spaniel and one another across the wide pond, and what else mattered ?

To-day they knew quite well that they ought not to be on the workman's ladder. Six pairs of merry little eyes were alert to catch the first glimpse of any member of the staff, when they would have fled in six different directions. They had not learnt—and certainly would not be taught—that it was a determined principle with the staff not to 'see' a single thing that could by any possibility be overlooked. Consequently, their piping did not make a single Officer or teacher dance.

In the midst of their singing, a different sound came from the well.

'The bucket gone again ? Twice to-day already I have got it for you !' scolded Sitabiya, a big girl.

A very sorrowful voice replied : 'The rope jumped out of my hand.'

'Sitabiya,' called out one of the staff, 'listen to what the "frogs" are singing.'

The ominous cloud on Sitabiya's face passed, and a

half smile came as she protested : ' But I do nothing all day but get the bucket up.'

' Well, you are the only girl who can ; it is the price of being clever.'

' Achcha, then I will be " pagali " (idiotic) after I have slept once more.'

' All right,' replied the Officer ; ' just keep the music ringing till bedtime.'

' There, it's beginning again !' exclaimed the girl who had dropped the bucket down, as that article came clanking up the sides of the well.

' What is beginning ?' asked one of the ' frogs,' for by this time the six irrepressibles had taken up positions round the well-kerb and were commenting freely on the accident.

' The music, of course,' put in the Cinder instantly.

Be it understood that these little girls, besides being called the ' frogs,' had each another nickname which highly suited her character. There was the High Court Judge, the Cinder, the Moon, the Angel, the Peacemaker, and the Tortoise.

(The Tortoise caught a bird one day, and when a crowd of admirers were wondering however *she* could have caught a *bird*, the Judge explained gravely : ' She went to sleep, and the bird felt brave enough to sit in her hair, and then caught its feet in a place where she had not combed it'—which was not the truth, of course !)

But to return to the well, where most of the school had now gathered. The remarks were interesting :

' Sara always lets the bucket go.'

' Oh, it's not always Sara ; other girls let it in, too.'

' There's so much water wanted ; it's water, water, water, from morning till night.'

' Are there any wells in Heaven ? I'm not going if there are.' And so on, until out of sheer perversity the ' frogs,' having got away a safe distance, began piping

out : ' Do your work with gladness every day.' They were very deservedly pelted with mitti (dry mud).

That evening the staff had a meeting, and decided to erect at the well an English village arrangement ; two buckets could be fixed on to a cylinder, and by turning handles on both sides, water could be drawn up easily and safely. The village blacksmith and carpenter were called in next day, and the idea put into operation.

There followed a glorious week without one jarring note about water. Everybody realized how much discord the well had been responsible for.

Alas ! The village workmen's erection soon began to prove a greater source of discord than the old way of drawing water. First the handle broke—it was tinkered up again ; next the chain gave way, and so on. Even the Officers themselves found it hard to ' keep the music ringing.'

It was then that the Cinder set in motion a splendid train of events.

' Who made the house ? ' she asked one day.

' The Government, of course,' replied the Judge.

' Why do you ask ? ' said the Officer in charge.

' Because the house never falls down, and if the Government made the well it wouldn't fall down,' replied that small personage. She was frequently in trouble for eating mortar ! Clearly she had discovered that Public Works Department mortar could not easily be made to ' fall down.'

' Why don't you ask the Government to make the well ? ' said the Angel to the Officer.

' I wonder if they would ? ' she replied.

Some days later an executive engineer received a visit from the Officer in charge of the Home, with the result that he generously promised to send a man to see what could be done.

There were a few rules in the Home which had to be

enforced and kept. One was that no girl should leave either the workshop or the schoolroom without permission. But the children had found aggravating little holes in the brickwork of the workshop through which things could be partly seen. When, a few days later, some one spied through a hole, men from the Public Works Department beginning to fix two iron staples on the well, trouble began in the workshop. Most unaccountably silk reels fell down; threads broke; good cocoons got into the waste; fires went out. The exasperated silk master, having exhausted his limited stock of both English and Hindustani, began to talk in his native tongue, which was the last thing likely to have a sobering effect. He displayed much more wisdom when he suddenly decided to give the girls their ten minutes' chutti, or interval, half an hour before it was due.

In two seconds the whole tribe was out. For another two seconds perfect silence reigned as they viewed the work and workmen on the well. Then a hubbub of voices broke out, all asking at once 'where they came from?' When some one who knew remarked: 'From the Government' a wild war-whoop of real unaffected joy made the buildings ring again, as the girls ran off to get ready for returning to work.

A very real cause of discord removed made it easier for one and all to 'keep the music ringing all the way!'

CHAPTER VIII

A LONG-REMEMBERED CHRISTMAS

‘It’s mine ! I had it first. I was standing by the well ; no one was near when I took it.’

‘Give it to me ! I only put it there while I went to get my brush !’

‘You can have it after I have finished !’

‘No ! Give it to me *now* !’

‘Steady girls, steady ; you cannot both have the bucket,’ called out the Captain.

‘But Bai, I had it first.’

‘No one had it when I saw it,’ asserted the first girl, with dogged persistence.

‘Your eyes are like a kite’s,’ returned the other.

‘And yours are like a frog’s.’

‘Frogs do look upwards, but kites—ugh !’

To the uninitiated the last retort may convey no meaning, but the girl to whom it was said knew perfectly what was implied. Kites are often called the scavengers of India—a dead dog, donkey, or any other decaying flesh is seen by these ‘outcast’ birds from almost impossible distances. Flocks of them swoop down to fight over the carcass and pick the bones white, and no one ever desires to watch the revolting scene. To say any one’s eyes are like a kite’s eyes, therefore, is nearly the last word in naughty taunts.

The Captain settled the dispute by making both girls wait till another bucket was available ; but at breakfast she also used many words that were not exactly poetical

over the Home's shortage of buckets, finishing up with :
'We must have more, or give up cleaning.'

Later in the day the Mother had a new idea.

'Try and keep them happy a little longer,' she urged the Captain, and as soon as possible went off to the city to call on Lady Everkind.

'So glad to see you, Major dear ; it must be a year since you last came,' said her Ladyship, leading the Mother to a seat.

'It is a year ago, and the same object that brought me then has brought me now.'

'Oh, those *dear* children ! Yes, we must help you with their Christmas gifts. What would you like to give them this year ?'

'I am afraid you will not be pleased over what I have made up my mind to give them ; but I have made it up like a man, and therefore cannot change it.'

Sir G. Everkind chuckled as he sat writing at a small desk, and remarked : 'Ladies usually take advantage of men's privileges.'

The Mother explained how necessary it was for the peace of her Home that every girl should possess her own bucket.

First she needs a bucket for toilet purposes. She carries it, full of water, to a tree or to some other convenient place, breaks off a twig, barks it, chews the soft end till the wood fibre is loose enough for a tooth-brush, then with charcoal and salt thoroughly cleanses her teeth, using her brazen drinking vessel for rinsing her mouth. Taking more water from the bucket, she soaps her face, ears, armpits, legs and feet, then slowly pours what water is left all over her body. This done, she dexterously makes a curtain of a dry sari, using one arm and hand for a curtain pole, removes the wet garment, wraps herself in the dry one, and goes to her room to finish dressing.

She also needs a bucket for washing her clothes, for mud-washing floors, for silk-reeling, for watering flowers, and many other purposes.

'Lady Everkind, we shall never have peace till every girl owns her own bucket,' finished the Mother.

'But buckets are such mundane things for Christmas presents,' objected Lady Everkind.

'I knew you would think so, but I do not think the children will,' replied the Mother.

'Could we not give them brass lotahs or something like that?' urged her ladyship.

'They could not wash clothes and mud-wash floors in lotahs. No, dear Lady Everkind. Please help me to get the buckets. I have a list here of sizes and prices. But it will cost more than double the sum we spent last year.'

'Buckets! I never heard of such a thing for Christmas presents,' said Sir George, sealing and stamping the letter he had been writing. 'Where is the list? let me see it. One hundred and seventeen buckets!' He laughed uproariously, but added: 'All right, leave the list here and I'll see what we can do about it.' He went out to get his letter posted.

'You will come and present their presents as you did last year?' asked the Mother of Lady Everkind.

'I don't think I can come and hand out buckets; really, it would be like helping to put out a fire.'

'Just what you will be doing, if you only knew!' thought the Mother as she recalled the frequent strife caused by the want of the articles. What she said was: 'Please promise to come; I am sure you will be glad when you hear what the children will say.'

Lady Everkind promised.

Darkness had fallen the evening before the day when the presentation of Christmas presents was to take place. The children went to bed full of wonder and expectation.

The most vigilant watchers among them had not seen one extra parcel come into the Compound, nor had any one of the staff been noticed doing anything unusual. What were the presents to be ?

On getting up in the morning, and running out to see a monstrous heap, covered with tarpaulin, under the tree and four teachers on guard, their curiosity rose to the highest heights. By 3 p.m., when Lady Everkind with many other friends arrived, the excited children were almost beyond control. With a very great effort on their own part, and even more patience on the part of the teachers, they pulled themselves together, and did their singing and drills in perfect order.

At last the moment came when they were to discover what was under the tarpaulin. From behind it Sir G. Everkind drew out and handed to her ladyship a very small, though real bucket, for a nursery child, whose blue-painted name it bore. Her ladyship passed it to the child. She looked at it rather dubiously at first, then nodded and smiled, and told her special friend very audibly : ' Now we can carry the tadpoles in my bucket ! '

Next appeared a very large bucket ; that went at once to the head landman ; the girls immediately warned him against ever touching any of the Compound buckets again. A small school-girl now received a bucket suitable in size to her strength ; then the whole crowd realized what was under the cover, and the remark : ' I believe there is one for us all ! ' was followed by such a cheering and hullabaloo ! Lady Everkind had no further qualms about handing out buckets. With *great* difficulty the children kept quiet till the last of the buckets had been presented. Then they broke out into the wildest cheering, accompanied by a tattoo beaten on the sides of the buckets.

For a full minute the Mother allowed them to continue. Then, as she stood and raised her hand, they ceased,


and perfect quiet reigned till they caught sight of the five chauffeurs, who had been waiting outside with the visitors' cars. They were carrying in huge baskets of such delicious sweets as seldom came the children's way. They cheered the chauffeurs, the givers, the Mother and their Officers, and settled down to receive this additional welcome gift.

'Well, really, I have been at many Christmas affairs, and I have no recollection of the toys we gave out, but I shall never forget the bucket Christmas,' exclaimed Sir G. Everkind to the gentleman sitting beside him.

'Neither shall I,' answered the friend, whose eyes were twinkling merrily at the sight of the children receiving the sweets in their buckets.

Their joy was abundantly evident to the kind friends who had given or collected the money to purchase the gifts.

After a walk round the Compound, during which every child disappeared, the visitors took their departure. Just as the cars got under way the children sprang from their hiding place, bucket and stick in hand, and cheered and beat their buckets till the cars were well out of sight. They then returned to their dormitories, sat down and sang every song they knew, beating time on their buckets, till they were almost too sleepy to undress and get into bed.



CHAPTER IX

FIRST EFFORTS AT SERVING OTHERS

‘ WE are holding an Exhibition in the Summer Capital, which will be opened by the Vicereine. Could you bring up six girls to reel silk and sew ? ’ the Mother read aloud to the staff from a letter from the Territorial Headquarters one day.

‘ How can we pick out six ? It would be easier to take forty-six ! ’ exclaimed one Officer.

Such an experience, such an outing, and only for six !

The best reelers and sewers were not always the best girls, and it was unanimously agreed by the staff that goodness must not be sacrificed to skill. They chose the six best girls to go as representatives to Simla. It is recorded to the high praise of the other girls that when the announcement was made, and the names of the chosen six were called out, there was no evidence of jealousy or bitterness of spirit. And so the little party set out for the hills.

The children’s whole lives had been spent on the plains, with occasional short train journeys. To live in the train two whole days and a night was a very exciting experience.

There is no reticence among the women in an Indian railway zenana* compartment. The sight of the children called forth a fusillade of questions : ‘ Where had they come from ? ’ ‘ Where were they going ? ’ ‘ How

* The part of a house or railway carriage where only women are allowed.

old were they ?' 'Were they married ?' 'No ? Then they must be Christians ?' 'Yes !' 'How far back—their fathers or their grandfathers ?' 'No, not their parents ?' 'Only themselves, such girls !' 'How did it ever happen ?'

The children's replies were a continual testimony to the power of Jesus Christ to enlighten even children's minds. Their evangelistic work had begun. Their evening and morning united prayers made a deep impression in the crowded compartment.

Passengers came and went at the different stations, and to every new arrival the children's story had to be repeated by the other passengers.

Arrived at the foot of the Himalayas, trains had to be changed, incurring a wait of six hours. Eagerly the children took the opportunity of a run up the first big hill they had ever seen. One who was some way ahead suddenly exclaimed : 'Oh, come, Mother, come ; here is a fan-tailed sheep.' Courteously the man who had the sheep on a lead stopped while the Mother and girls stroked and petted his beautiful animal, the girls congratulating him upon the many medals the sheep was wearing.

'What are the medals for ?' asked the Mother.

'To show how many fights he has won,' was the girls' prompt reply.

'Fights !' exclaimed the Mother. She learned that sheep-baiting was a favourite pastime of landowners and men who could afford to indulge in it.

Sitting on that hillside at the foot of the Himalayas, a long talk on the difference in the hearts of men when they had been regenerated by the Blood of Jesus showed the girls clearly another aspect of Christian love—kindness to animals.

The Himalaya Mountains caused them great consternation as the tiny train wound its way round and round,

in and out, ascending higher and higher all the time. Bai had gone to Simla two weeks before, and was to meet the party on their arrival. 'How shall we ever find her in this fearsome place?' the girls constantly inquired. When the train steamed slowly and unexpectedly into the station, and they saw Bai waiting for them, they leaped out, and six pairs of hands seized her as if they were afraid that she might get lost in the mountains even yet.

The next day being Sunday, they attended for the first time a Christian Meeting outside their own School Home. For the first time also they heard a good congregation of Europeans, men and women, singing together. Indians, other than Christians, do very little singing, the men rarely singing at all, unless they are professionals. The volume of sound coming from a crowd of hearty Christian missionaries made the children tremble with mixed feelings of surprise and fear. Asked afterwards if they enjoyed the Meetings, they replied: 'Oh, yes, except the noise when the people tried to sing.'

On the congregation the effect of the children's singing was quite different. The six asked to sing by themselves, and before they finished, the listeners were moved to tears as they realized the wondrous change Salvation had made.

The day of the Exhibition was a great day. Products of industries from all kinds of Salvation Army Institutions were on view. After the opening ceremony, Her Excellency the Vicereine visited every stall, and she watched with the keenest interest the girls sitting reeling. Having inspected and decided to buy their sewing when finished, to their unutterable surprise the Vicereine then shook hands with each girl.

'The Lady Lat-Sahiba (Vicereine) shook hands with us!' the girls never tired of telling their friends at home afterwards, knowing well what a sum many high-caste

people would have been willing to give for that high honour.

After Her Excellency had made the tour of the Exhibition with many other high officials, she sat down, and the children were asked to sing.

Without a tremor of nervousness they marched up, saluted, and sang very sweetly in excellent English :

Into a camp where an outcaste tribe lay,
With hearts heavy burdened, and sin-sick and sore,
The Salvation Army came preaching one day,
Nobody had ever done it before.

Chorus :

Tell it again, tell it again,
Salvation's story repeat o'er and o'er,
Till none can say of the children of men,
'Nobody ever had told me before.'

Jesus, the Man who on Calvary died,
By His own Blood opened wide Heaven's door,
Did He so love them, that poor outcaste tribe ?
Nobody ever had told them before.

We are their children, redeemed by that Blood,
Knowing its power ; when school-days are o'er,
Helped by The Army, and Power from above,
We'll tell it where ' no one has told it before.'

When the voices ceased, the ladies were openly weeping, and the gentlemen either wiping their eye-glasses, or blowing their noses. Few among those high officials but knew perfectly well, from experience in dealing with them, what an ' Untouchable ' outcaste tribe was like. This sweet new vision of the children in such a place, singing their heart-moving appeal, moved them to their depths. Afterwards that song bore good fruit.

The following day the children returned home, quite unconscious of the deep impression they had made on all who had seen and heard them.

Now the Home was situated near the high road, fourteen miles from a river which Hindus believe to be sacred.

Over half a million people come annually to bathe in the river during the time of the first equinox, which was drawing near. For ten days and nights the people passed along the road in one unbroken stream. Some rested occasionally by the wayside ; others passed on, on, on, without a halt in the dense procession. Seeing that so many girls were saved, the Mother decided to close school and workroom, and let the girls carry the message of Salvation to the crowds.

Day after day, in relays, they helped in the Open-Airs, singing and praying, giving their simple testimonies, and repeating in unison long passages of Scripture. Cheerfully they recited what they were told to recite ; when allowed to make their choice it was always either : ' The woman of Samaria,' or the message from 1 John i. 5-10, which speaks of the Blood of Jesus Christ cleansing from all sin.

The actual date of the equinox fell on Sunday. On that day there were no people on the road either going or coming. The children and staff, tired out with the week's work, laid down and slept till evening instead of having the usual happy singing and Meetings. At the close of evening prayers the girls inquired : ' Are we going out to-morrow ? '

' What would you like to do ? ' they were asked.

' Go out,' came their instant reply. ' Jesus loves the people, and they don't know it ; at least we can tell them that.'

On the Monday, therefore, the Open-Air work began again, and in addition hundreds of Gospel portions were sold ; many hundreds more were scornfully refused.

At the close of the fourth day the Mother met a teacher looking weary and ill.

' Come and sit under a tree and rest awhile,' said the Mother.

As they went they met the Patani nurse, and the three

sat down together. 'Oh, I do love Jesus,' exclaimed the teacher, with tears running down her face. 'When I was at school I learned the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, but I never understood till to-day the meaning of "He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." A little while ago I was feeling annoyed because so many of the people took the books and then threw them on the ground, spat on them, and walked over them. Suddenly I remembered the whole chapter, and I could see Jesus, despised and rejected. I understood how He became acquainted with grief, and oh ! my people reject Him still !'

'Dear,' said the Mother, 'they don't know about Him.'

'Oh, yes, they do,' said the girl teacher intensely. 'Those who did not want the books were those who *did* know about Him ; they all scornfully called me a Christ-girl.'

Almost unconsciously the three closed their eyes and began to pray, led by the girl, who seemed literally to clasp the feet of Jesus while, in a torrent of sweetly simple words, she poured out her love, telling Him how happy she was to be known as a Christ-girl, and making intercession for those who had treated the books so contemptuously. Only a few years before, as an Army school-girl, she had been helped to store her mind with many choice passages of Scripture ; now, as she was able to bear it, the Holy Spirit was making this store into a possession which no gold on earth could purchase.

Strengthened and refreshed, the three returned to their seemingly unequal task, knowing in their hearts that 'He shall have the heathen for an inheritance,' and that the despised of the earth will confound the mighty.

CHAPTER X

WORK AND PLAY

THE Home family constantly increased in numbers. All the time new girls were coming in twos and threes. Some settled quickly into the new life; some came determined to give trouble until they could get away. These last were generally big girls whose parents had been counting on receiving a marriage dowry for their daughters. In some tribes a girl is worth from fifty to sixty pounds when she becomes of marriageable age. Before she can go to her husband he must pay the price agreed upon. This must not be looked upon as callousness on the part of parents; it is an ancient old-age pension scheme that has worked out quite as happily as many other schemes that have been more applauded. Though the custom has in some cases been exploited by selfish persons, the fact remains that for centuries past it has proved one of the strong controlling forces for good in the social life of the people. It has made for much greater comfort for the old people than if they had been dependent on the whims and fancies of the young.

As may be expected, the girls grow up knowing their own value, and also that the girl who costs the most will be treated the best.

Who could be surprised if, when torn from parents sent to prison for crime which they had much more probably been incited to than had desired to commit, the girls swore to remain faithful to their loved ones? To become Christians was to break caste; to break caste

was to make themselves quite valueless as wives from a monetary point of view.

Big girls coming in this spirit were a problem in themselves—with no school knowledge, often unable even to thread a needle when introduced to the sewing-room ; having never seen a cocoon, and not knowing how silk was produced, nor even wanting to know.

Then small children who from babyhood had spent three or four years in the Home Nursery were quite different little people from those of five and six years who came direct from a wandering tribe into the Home.

It was therefore decided to divide the family into three parts. The first was made up of big girls whose daily conduct proved they were trying to live Christlike lives, and of the small children who had grown up in the Home ; in the second were the new big girls ; and in the third the new small girls, with a family of little boys whose sisters were in the Home. By this arrangement the children of one family need not be widely separated until they grew quite big.

This dividing up entirely changed the aspect of the Home. No force was brought to bear upon the new girls, but they themselves were quick to see the great difference Salvation had made in the lives of the other big girls. These older girls in the first division began to grow very helpful and reliable in teaching and caring for and amusing the smaller children of both Homes.

Indian children have no jolly heritage of games like European children. Our girls know few beside those which their Officers have taught them, but their own inventions for amusement are often most original.

One morning there was a great deal of mysterious excitement in the air. Among other things the big girls were begging for tin-tacks. 'Why do you want tin-tacks ?' asked Bai.

'Oh, never mind, please don't ask. Only give us some,'

said an eager group. Bai gave out all she had. They ran off happily, only to come back and ask if there were any more, or else could they have some flour to make paste?

The Mother learned of these goings on, wondered what they meant, and forgot all about them for a few days. Then she heard the big girls using an unusual number of English words in what sounded like a Meeting. She quietly stole round to the place from whence the sound came. But some one was on the watch; the alarm was given, and she arrived to hear only peals on peals of merry laughter.

'Girls,' she said, smiling, 'why did you want the tin-tacks and the paste?'

'Come, we'll show you,' said a leader amongst them.

Following her into the dormitory the Mother saw, tacked or pasted up over each bed, pictures of groups of Young People—Corps Cadets, Life-Saving Guards, Singing Companies, and others cut out of the English 'Young Soldier.' On every picture one special face—always a girl's—was marked round in pencil.

'The friends who send you "The Young Soldier"' would be pleased to see how much you like to have it,' she remarked, 'first to read the stories, and then to decorate your walls with the pictures.'

The Mother knew there was some idea behind the mere decorating. She counted the pictures and found there were thirty-nine—all different groups. What rule the girls had followed for marking out the special faces she could not guess. They certainly had not marked all the prettiest, nor all the youngest, nor all the smartest. It seemed that they had really picked out good faces, and she was intensely curious as to what the marking meant. But she knew it would be useless to ask.

The following week the teachers who taught English seemed unusually happy. They were overheard remarking to each other: 'The girls have never been so good

and attentive as now. They are asking intelligent and amusing questions, and talking to one another in English out of school hours more freely than ever before.'

Certainly, a breeze of English was blowing through the Compound. Songs were being learnt from 'Army Bells'; Officers and teachers were 'held up' at every corner to explain what this word meant, and how that one was pronounced. Every game had been dropped. Nothing was heard but English singing, reading, and talking in every out-of-school hour.

Then one day the whole secret came out. The girls whose faces had been marked round in the portrait groups above the beds were supposed to have volunteered and been accepted for India. Some of the Home girls were answering to such names as Jenkins, Taylor, Stewart, Goodenough, and others which they had taken from the printed names under the pictures—they were supposed to be the English Officers who had already arrived in India and needed interpreters!

In the play-meetings, therefore, wonderful interpreting had been going on, punctuated by hilarious laughter and cutting criticism.

In another part of the game certain girls were the parents of accepted Officers who had *not* yet arrived. These were frequently visited and asked 'when their daughters were sailing?'

One evening, while the Mother sat pretending to be utterly lost in a book, she heard a most interesting and original Meeting. It was all play—just girls' play—but it made her shed tears and think long, long thoughts. The Meeting began in a most orderly way with the singing, many times over, of all the verses and the chorus of 'Come, join our Army, to battle we go.'

Then the leader got up and said in a determined voice: 'We are not going to pray to-night, we are going to punish. Are those mothers here whose daughters have

not yet started for India ? Yes, there they are ! Stand up, all of you. Now, why have your daughters not started ?'

Oh, what excuses those play-mothers made ! One dear daughter was 'afraid of the sea' ; another 'had not enough clothes' ; another 'was such a loving daughter that she did not like to leave her home.' 'She is my only child,' pleaded a fourth play-mother ; 'she is clever ; I don't want her to go and live in a jungle' ; and so it went on till every one had answered.

Then the leader began again : 'Are you, or are you not Salvation Army Soldiers ?'

The play-mothers all admitted they were Soldiers.

'Are your daughters Salvation Army Captains ?' asked the leader.

'Certainly not !' answered one indignant mother ; 'my daughter is an Ensign.'

'Mine is only a Lieutenant, she is very young,' pleaded another.

'Silence !' commanded the leader. 'Your remarks are not to the point. I meant—are your daughters Officers ?'

'Leaders should say what they mean,' put in a voice from the back.

'Hear, hear !' came in a chorus ; but the leader was in no wise disturbed.

'Are they Officers ?' she persisted. The mothers admitted that their daughters were Officers.

'Then,' continued the leader, 'did you yourselves not promise, and let them promise, to do anything they could do, or go anywhere they could go ? Here, everybody sing this chorus, and let us see if these mothers will sing :—

We're The Army that shall conquer,

As we go to seek the lost, and to bring them back to God,
And His Salvation to every nation

We will carry with the Fire and the Blood !

They sang it over and over, accompanied by much vigorous clapping of hands, and standing up, and sitting down, the 'mothers' joining in as heartily as any one.

The leader began again : ' Now I ask the people here present what is to be done with mothers like these ? They are Salvationists, their daughters are Officers, they sing that they are going to seek the lost of every nation, and then they keep their daughters at home. As if it mattered about clothes ! We could give them a sari. And as if " loving " daughters were not just the kind we want ; they could keep unloving ones at home. Oh, these mothers must be punished. Now, what shall we do to them ? '

' Turn them out of The Army,' suggested one.

' Take the daughters by force,' said another.

' Make the daughters all Soldiers again ! ' cried a third.

' No ! ' said a very commanding voice ; ' turn these mothers out among the heathen and make them stop there till they have learned how dreadful it is to be heathen mothers.'

' Yes, yes ! ' ' Hear, hear ! ' ' The very best punishment ! ' agreed a chorus of voices.

' Stand up, all of you,' ordered the leader ; ' and now march and sing :

It is not where you are needed,
But where you are needed most,
That one becomes a thousand,
And two becomes a host !

So the ' mothers ' were marched out to the ' jungle ' and solemnly advised not to let themselves be seen till they had induced their daughters ' to go ' where they were needed most.

The bell rang for evening prayers. Play came to an

end. All the girls scampered off to the schoolroom and were soon singing :

Lord, I have passed another day,
And come to thank Thee for Thy care,
Forgive my faults in work or play,
And listen to my evening prayer.

But the Mother sat on. She wondered how those girls in the pictured groups, whose faces were marked round, would feel if they had seen this game. Would they be glad ? Would it make them happy to know that the Indian girls were impersonating them and getting ready to help them ? Would it make them hurry up ?

And if their mothers could have seen those little play-mothers being marched out to live among the heathen till they knew what it was to be a heathen mother, would they have altered the chorus and sung :

Oh, not to where they are wanted least,
But where they are wanted most,
We'll send our sons and daughters,
To seek and to save the lost.

CHAPTER XI

A WONDERFUL VOYAGE

SOON after Christmas another message from the Simla Headquarters set the whole Compound in a commotion. Again six girls were wanted, but this time they were required to go a much greater journey—all the way to England—to represent the ‘Untouchables’ at the great International Congress of 1914.

The children were immensely proud of the great honour that was to be theirs. Fifteen girls fulfilled the required conditions—they were under twelve years of age, able to sing and drill, quite healthy, and not afraid to go on the water. But only six could go! It was left to the girls themselves to decide who these should be. Every girl was told to write the names of the six girls she would like to go, and drop the paper in a basket. Those who had the most votes would be accepted and there would be no change.

It is noteworthy that, without a suggestion from Officers or teachers, not a single girl voted for herself, and that the fortunate six were almost unanimously chosen. No further discussion took place, and preparations for the journey began.

The day of departure arrived, and with loving good-byes and some tears, the Mother and six girls set out for London.

Five days and nights of travelling across the great Indian peninsular by train brought them to Tuticorin, where for the first time in their lives the children saw the

sea. But the bustle of getting on the boat, and their novel surroundings, completely occupied their attention ; as evening had come they were soon asleep and saw little of the water. They awoke in Colombo Harbour, where kind comrades met the party and had them comfortably fixed up in a house on the seashore. They were to stay there ten days to fulfil the by-laws in connexion with the plague district of India from which they had come.

The magnitude of the sea at first almost paralysed the girls with awe and fear. As the high waves came rolling in and broke with thunderous crashing, they ran screaming back in terror of being overtaken. Day after day the same thing happened. The sea came no farther in ; they began to ask why it did not ? How could so much water remain in one place ? How did the little fishing boats keep on top of it ?

When the day arrived for them to board the big ship for England, they needed much reassuring to believe that she could live on such ever-rolling waters. Every care had been taken beforehand to make comfortable and convenient arrangements for the children on the great Orient liner. A steward summoned from the deck on which the children's cabin was situated led the nervous little group to their quarters.

'Cheer up,' he said. 'I was Young People's Sergeant-Major at Plymouth once. Don't you worry, I'll see you are all right.'

Blessed Salvation Army ! The man was a backslider, alas ! but his love for his old comrades was deep and true. He proved a very real friend to the children until the voyage ended.

It was not a very happy little group who gathered for prayers in the cabin that night. The immensity of the sea, and their mysterious surroundings filled their hearts with fear. It would have been very easy for them to give way to real heathen wailing and lamentation. But the

courage of faith triumphed, and with an effort that was almost painful to witness, they succeeded in praying one after another, and at last in singing in subdued voices the sweet little evening verse :

Lord, keep us safe this night,
Secure from all our fears,
May angels guard us while we sleep
Till morning light appears.

Morning found them a little more cheerful, but still nervous and very unwilling to go to the dining-room for breakfast, till the ex-Sergeant-Major came along and told them to fall in and follow him. Taking a hand of each of the two smallest he marched them off, singing :

We're marching on, we're marching on,
We're marching on together ;
God bless our Army round the world,
And give this ship good weather.

'You are not singing it right,' Mary told him.

'Is that so ? What was wrong ?' he asked

'There's nothing in the chorus about good weather,' said she ; 'it is, "keep us true for ever."'

'Ah,' said the backslidden man, 'you always sing it that way, my dear, and never forget it.'

'Why—didn't you ?' asked the child, utterly unconscious of the probes her artless words were making.

They arrived at the table where a happy surprise awaited them in the form of steaming-hot rice and curry.

'Now say your grace, little girls,' said their new friend in a loud tone, which made everybody else look up. They saw six black, shining heads all reverently bowed, while in her native tongue one girl asked a blessing on their food.

The ex-Sergeant-Major looked at the passengers defiantly, lifted his eyebrows, and nodded his head, as if to say : 'That's all right. You can say what you like to me ; but don't you dare scoff at *them* while I'm about.'

Later in the morning as the Mother and girls were sitting in a group chatting and watching the passing ships, a kind fatherly man came in and asked if the children would like to join in the games.

‘They know so little English,’ demurred the Mother.

‘But they will understand the racing and skipping,’ he urged, and very shyly the girls went to join in the games.

Fortunately they did not understand all the remarks that were made at first by the other children. But when the bell rang for dinner the white girls and some of the boys who had previously been carrying off all the prizes already knew that their skill would be strongly challenged now in all games where speech was not required.

By the end of the first week four of the six had to be handicapped for all foot and hand games. Even so they often won, while daily their English increased with startling rapidity.

Tired after many days of the same games, the girls then introduced Indian ones, which were heartily enjoyed. One became an especial favourite. Making an old tin kettle serve the purpose of the cheap earthenware jar they used in India, one after the other the children were blindfolded, and then tried with a big stick to bang the kettle, each being allowed six efforts. The one who struck the kettle most times won.

Excitement rose to delirious heights over this game, for men and women joined in, and as fast as one kettle was banged into flat nothingness, some one managed to produce another.

At length, early one bright May morning the great ship entered the Thames. On the wharf at Tilbury a group of well-known Officers waited for the party. The children, happy to see again friends they had known in India, ran and skipped about, quite regardless of the interest and amusement they were causing among the crowds of

people on the wharf. Their friend the ex-Sergeant-Major, came down from the ship to bid them farewell.

‘Good-bye,’ said wee Mary, repeating what she had heard others say : ‘Good-bye ; if we don’t meet again on earth we shall meet in Heaven.’

Great tears burst from the man’s eyes, and he groaned out ‘In Heaven ! God help me, yes, my girls, it shall be in Heaven.’

Later on in the tour, to the children’s very great joy, he came up to greet them in the full uniform of a Salvation Army Soldier.

‘He didn’t tell us he belonged to the Muktifauj *,’ they remarked wonderingly to the Mother.

She explained that they had been used to win him back.

‘Oh, how glad Jesus must be !’ said one. ‘We must do more things like that for Him.’

No Congress Delegation was received with greater interest and affection than this small group of Indian girls—the first to visit Europe. They had learnt quite a number of songs to sing at the different Meetings, but the one most often asked for was that which the Mother had purposely written for the occasion. Sung to a plaintive Indian tune (which, in spite of all the troublous years between, is still fondly remembered), it ran :

Jesus is calling ! Oh ! can you hear,
His voice so tender, His message so clear ?

Suffer the children to come unto Me,
Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven to be.

Away in dark India, how great the shame !
Millions of children have ne’er heard His name.

Soldiers of Jesus ! Oh, what will you do ?
We for those children have come to call you !

* The Salvation Army.

The influence of these erstwhile little outcaste girls on the enormous crowds who came to see and hear them was very wonderful. The effect of the tour on the girls themselves was to prove even more wonderful.

The English Congress having ended, the children went for a tour in Scandinavia and Finland. One of their first efforts was to learn a little song in Swedish. In four days they succeeded, and sang it to the great delight of the Swedish audiences. On to Norway, where the days were twenty-two hours long, and the children saw no night at all.

They were working very hard ; drilling and singing on an average in two Meetings a day, travelling long distances, sleeping in different places almost every night. The centre of attraction wherever they appeared, they were seldom out of a crowd. This was tiring, but with only now and then a humorous complaint they kept cheerful and good.

‘I don’t want to go to Heaven!’ exclaimed one of the biggest girls once, as she threw her bag up in the rack and herself down in the corner seat of the railway carriage.

‘Why don’t you want to go to Heaven?’ asked the Mother.

‘The Bible says there is no night there, and I don’t like places where there is no night,’ replied the girl. ‘There is not enough time to sleep.’

‘Oh, in Heaven you will be able to tuck your head under your wing, poor thing,’ said another girl, comfortingly, as she pulled down the blinds, and very soon the tired little group were all asleep.

‘What is that picture?’ asked a girl, on another occasion, pointing to a poster advertising a play.

Some one told her it was meant for Satan.

‘People are strange,’ she commented. ‘God created man in His own image, and Satan like a snake. Here they

try to make Satan look like a man, and in India we make a snake look like a god.'

It was while they were in this far Northern country that the Great War broke out. Crossing the North Sea became difficult, and they had to take a long train journey, often interrupted by the influx of Russian refugees to the north of Finland, whence a few hours in a motor-car across the edge of Lapland brought them into Sweden again.

Their Swedish escort told them when they were in Lapland. Instantly Mary exclaimed: 'Then I have been every step of the way:

From Lapland's frozen borders,
To India's burning sands.' *

Arrived again in Bergen, Norway, they boarded a boat for Newcastle.

Several times during the short voyage across the North Sea, the Swedish boat was held up by British Naval officers who came on board to inspect the passengers. One Officer, carrying as much of the pride of the British Navy on his back as there were inches to show it, looked at the passport and then at the Mother and children, the while asking all kinds of extraordinary questions. At last the Mother remarked: 'We are a delegation to The Salvation Army——'

Before she could finish her sentence he broke in 'Salvation Army—why didn't you say that at first?' Without waiting to hear her reply, 'You did not ask me,' he returned the passport and was off over the side of the ship.

Looking down from the rail the children were greatly interested in the sailors bobbing up and down in their small boat. Equally were the sailors interested as, look-

* The Swedish rendering of the hymn lines—'From Greenland's icy mountains, to India's coral strand.'

ing up, they saw the children chattering like magpies above their heads. The officer seated himself and gave the order to move on.

‘ Call out all together, “ God bless the British Navy,” ’ whispered the Mother to the children.

Six clear little voices at once sang out in chorus : ‘ God bless the British Navy ! ’

‘ God bless The Salvation Army ! ’ called up a strong, manly voice in reply, and every sailor shouted a loud hurrah. The officer lifted his hat and waved it ; the oars dipped and splashed, and they were gone.

CHAPTER XII

HOME ONCE MORE

LATE on a brilliant moonlight Saturday night in November, the little party arrived back at their own Home School. The girls gave them a loving, hilarious greeting, after which they were all soon asleep. Next morning, however, every child was up long before the birds, and tongues began chattering, not to cease except during Meeting hours, till long after every bird and flower had again gone to rest.

No one thought about orders for Monday for the party, and none were given; but before going to bed six tired, sleepy girls borrowed working clothes from other girls. When the bell rang in the morning they walked into the workroom, set about preparing their silk-reeling machines, and began working as naturally as if they had never been away a day.

They had learned many things; and had unconsciously acquired a higher attitude of mind. They had seen a great deal of the world, and many different people. To belong to The Salvation Army—with its uniform of such endless variety, yet always immediately recognizable—now meant a great deal more to them than they could put into words. Decidedly they had not travelled with closed eyes or dormant brains.

As the days passed, the Officers began to perceive how much the tour had done for them. The new influence they brought back lifted the whole Home to a very much higher level than any one had ever expected such chil-

dren could attain. Many plans now became possible that previously would not have been considered.

The six girls had acquired an excellent knowledge of English, which they were able to impart to the younger children.

The poverty of Christian literature in all North Indian language is appalling. Children who have been taught to read get through all the suitable books available in the leisure of a few weeks. Hence the knowledge of English becomes almost a necessity to spiritual growth. The almost unbridgeable gulf between Indians who have access to English literature, and those who have practically nothing upon which to feed their minds and souls, is apparent in every movement of Indian life.

The Officers decided to celebrate the following Christmas by commencing Open-Air Meetings in the village on Sunday afternoons. Only on the days of the great religious festivals had such work been attempted hitherto, and then it was done for passing strangers, not for the villagers themselves.

The village people were under no illusion about the caste of the children gathered under The Salvation Army wing. They had watched them arrive with their police escorts, and had kept keen eyes on them. Very little had they seen of the children during the first years—at most an orderly walk along the road, accompanied by Officers and teachers.

Now, as with tambourines (their Christmas presents), organ, drum, and Flag, the biggest girls formed up beside a well in the centre of the village and began to sing, people came running from every side. They stood on their roofs, doorsteps, and every place of vantage to see the miracle of children born to be criminals—according to their ideas—taking part in a religious Meeting. The girls sang and prayed with great earnestness; read from their Bibles, and gave simple and direct testimonies to

the saving and indwelling power of Jesus Christ. Officers and teachers spoke longer and explained more fully ; but it was the undeniable change in the girls that most impressed the crowd.

The effect of the first Meeting on the girls themselves was to deepen their desire to go back to their own people with the good news of Salvation. Sunday after Sunday the Meetings were continued, in different parts of the village. Within three months, over eleven thousand people must have heard, most of them for the first time, the message of Salvation from these untouchable girls.

‘Where was The Salvation Army when my parents were children?’ burst out a girl at the close of one Open-Air Meeting.

‘Why do you ask?’

‘Because if they had been taught what I have learned, they would not have been wicked.’

‘They would not have listened to the teaching,’ said the Mother. ‘You never would if you had not been brought here against your will.’

‘That is so,’ they all agreed.

‘But my parents would listen to *me*. Can I not go back and tell them?’ pleaded the first girl. Alas ! her parents were still in prison.

Later on, in the Mother’s room, the girl was tenderly enlightened as to her parents’ whereabouts, and told that when she was eighteen she should return to them, as by that time they would have returned to the settlement. She was urged to learn all she could in the meantime and prepare herself not only to carry the good news to her own relations, but to the whole tribe.

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One of the most important of the lessons they still needed to learn was against taking the ‘line of least resistance’—often the Mother had explained to the girls that if they were ever going to be worth anything

to God and The Army they would have to leave the side of the line that they and their ancestors had always lived on, and come over to the other side.

Now among the many duties which must be done in India when a farm forms one of the Home industries, is hammering castor-oil cake into powder for the purpose of fertilizing fields. It is not quite easy work. The cake is lumpy and very hard and needs much pounding.

The girls did not mind hard work a bit. There was not a soft muscle among them ; a soft muscle was far too despicable a thing for a healthy girl to keep long. But they were fond of fun, and liked a little play between the hammering. Sometimes play was too attractive, and the girls found themselves with unfinished work when the bell rang for food.

As a rule, Saturday brought no school or industrial work. It was the day the girls cleaned their houses and their heads, washed their clothes and attended to other purely domestic work.

English girls need not lift their eyebrows and say : ' Fancy washing on Saturday ! ' If, after they had washed their clothes, they could be sure of getting them as dry as feathers in less time than the washing took, and the same clothes needed neither mangling nor ironing, probably they would make Saturday *their* washing day !

As a matter of fact, the girls washed their clothes every day of the week ; but on Saturday they gave more time to them, making their Sunday garments spotless and creaseless to wear to the Meetings.

This Saturday was a beautiful day, and the girls did not hurry over the house-cleaning. It was great fun spashing about mud-washing floors, and trying to make each room look better than the last one.

They had just finished when the Mother called them. They always ran happily on Saturdays when she called,

because it might be for a snake-hunt, or to receive some fruit, or to hear a funny story. They all came together, just as they were, to see the Mother standing beside a great heap of unpounded castor-oil cake which they had left. The girls glanced at one another from downcast faces ; this was not what they had expected !

‘ Girls ! look at this. And it is wanted early on Monday morning for the fields,’ said the Mother.

They looked, of course, but looking did not reduce the cake to powder. ‘ Now, my dear girls,’ she went on, ‘ you can go and get your food, wash your heads, and have your baths, then you must come and put your backs into this and finish it to-day.’

Ugh ! And there were their Sunday saris not touched. If some people in the world do not love washing, they did, and always made it last as long as possible. The Mother knew this, but she could not let them begin that washing until the oil-cake was finished.

Heads, of course, must be attended to. They all had thick, long hair that was not easy to keep clean unless they were very regular in their attentions to it. The Mother sometimes told them she would cut it off to save them trouble if they liked ; but she knew they would never allow that, it would have made them look like widows !

When the heads were finished, they all went to the barn and started on the oil-cake. Spread out on the floor the heap was much bigger than they had expected ; but they set to work singing, and the Mother sat down near them.

‘ I will teach you a new chorus,’ she said. ‘ Now, all together :

If you put off till to-morrow
The work you should do to-day,
Time from next day will be taken
That otherwise might be for play.

They learnt it and sang it till she was gone—and then they said what they thought about it.

Long before that oil-cake was powder the moon came up in her most glorious style. In England moonlight is nothing exceptional. Big lamps spoil it in the towns, and the mists dim its brilliance in the country ; but in North India there are neither lamps nor mists, and the moonlight is wonderful. It always affects the children in some way. Generally it takes hold of them like the very spirit of the wind and makes them want to sing, and dance, and beat drums, and do all sorts of things.

At once these girls all began to sing : ‘ Here we float in our golden boat ’ ; but their heap of cake did not seem to grow less.

The Mother came out to look. ‘ Really, girls ! ’ she began. Sonnamony interrupted her : ‘ Do you think I shall be allowed to go for a ride on the moon when I get to Heaven ? ’

‘ I hope you have got a long way to go before you get there,’ replied the Mother. ‘ Now listen, girls ; if you get this cake finished by nine o’clock I will give you all some tea, and you shall play an hour in the moonlight. If it is not finished there will be no tea and no play. I have spoken,’ and she went away.

The girls began : ‘ Pass that sieve.’ ‘ Give me that heavy hammer.’ ‘ Get farther out.’ ‘ Let us have a little room.’

‘ Now then, girls, this won’t do,’ and Nishtani threw back a whole lot of cake that would not go through the sieve. They knew it would all have to go through the sieve, and did not even stop to comment. They were working at last as they ought to have worked at first.

They pounded for half an hour in silence. Then one of them exclaimed : ‘ Girls, I have been resisting temptation ever since the clock struck half-past seven.’

‘ You cannot talk and work properly, girls,’ said

Taramoni, in tones so like those of the Mother's own voice that they all laughed except the girl who had been resisting temptation.

There was another spell, with not a sound beside those of the beating hammers, till some one said : ' Oh, I can smell the kettle boiling ! '

She was much too far away to hear it boil ; but she knew the smell of the burning cowdung which is always used for fuel out of doors. Another began to sing :

Oh, I can hear the rattle of the kettle-lid,
Bring that tea,
With lots of milk and sugar in,
Bring that tea.

' Pass the sieve over,' called out Nishtani.

To their great joy one tiny little heap more all round would clear the floor, and it was still only eight-thirty ! All the suppression of the last hour and a half came out in the noise they made over that last little heap. They hammered and went on hammering, and then coughed and coughed again.

The coughing was quite a new device, to indicate that tea was needed to wash the dust out of their throats. They had been pounding cake every day, and had never thought of that before !

They cleared away the pounded cake, swept the floor, rushed off for their cups, came back for the tea and biscuits, and then had a jolly moonlight party.

Some people may think that because tea comes from India, Indians are always drinking it. If so, their thinking is a long way out. The girls only got tea at picnics, and on other special occasions ; it was far too expensive for everyday use.

While they were drinking they remembered their washing, and wanted to do it then, but the Mother said no, they could play but not wash. They did not fret ;

the moon was too lovely. They gave themselves up to the fun of the hour.

The Mother and Bai sat watching them and quite forgot the time. When they did remember, it was past eleven o'clock instead of ten.

The girls did not lie awake many seconds in bed that night. But after Taramoni had been asleep a little while she began to dream about her unwashed sari.

The fact was she had not folded it up. It had been pushed in a heap and lain in the corner of her box all the week. She was dreaming that it was dirty as well as tumbled, and she began to cry. Miriam, sleeping next to her, woke her up and found out what she was crying for. 'Oh, go to sleep,' commanded Miriam; then 'When we get up we can make the sari damp and put it between the grind-stones for an hour. That will get the creases out. And, anyway, all our saris will be about the same.'

When Taramoni woke again it was broad daylight, and there were only three other girls still in the dormitory. Nishtani was putting her hair out of her eyes; Sitabiya was stretching and yawning, and Miriam was beginning to dress. Bai heard them moving and called out, asking if they were not ashamed to be so late.

'No,' said Taramoni, 'an angel has just been down to tell me that when I get to Heaven I shall have a sari made of the purple sunset, trimmed with lightning.'

'Oh, very nice you will look sitting on the moon,' said Bai, as she splashed a few drops of water out of a glass in her hand down upon Taramoni's face.

'Oh, the diamonds! the diamonds from my sari border, they have melted and become water! Alas! alas! my diamonds,' moaned Taramoni, as she continued to dress herself for Sunday in a disgracefully dirty and crumpled sari.

But they learned the lesson, and it never had to be repeated.

CHAPTER XIII

STRENGTH IN TIME OF NEED

ONE by one the eldest girls were coming to the end of their school days. Their future had to be considered. Not all of them were clever enough to be teachers, or spiritually strong enough to be Officers. Domestic service is impossible in India for unmarried girls. But for training in Women's Hospitals as nurses young women are in great demand. India has in the past looked upon nursing as an occupation fit only for outcaste women. Much needless suffering and loss of life has been caused through the ignorance and carelessness of those despised though necessary helpers. But among the many inestimable blessings which the servants of Christ have brought to India are Women's Hospitals, which now send out a constant stream of carefully trained women doctors, assistant surgeons, compounders, and nurses.

Among the girls in the Home were some of the midwives caste. Crude and ignorant as their ancestors had been, centuries of experience in the one occupation, passed down from mother to daughter, had given these girls an instinct and knowledge in nursing which the others did not possess. Very gladly did they respond to the suggestion that they should be thoroughly trained in their craft.

Three of the eldest were chosen; with very mixed feelings they prepared to enter a rather distant Zenana (Women's) Hospital. Joyful in the prospect of this new opportunity, sorrowful at the thought of leaving what had been a very happy home, they were sometimes found

eagerly discussing their new work, or weeping as one by one the old loved duties were laid down. At last two days only remained. On one a farewell feast was to be given; the next would see the three girls enter on the first phase of their individual careers.

Sleeping together in a room they had often occupied, towards midnight one woke the other two saying she was in great pain, adding, 'I think something bit my toe.'

Instantly they rose and gave the alarm. The toe was examined and, alas! too plainly were to be seen the three marks of a snake's teeth.

All the known remedies were immediately applied, but without avail; the poison had already gone too far. Soon Nepali knew she could not recover.

Tenderly the Mother and staff prayed with her and spoke of the welcome that would be hers in Heaven. 'Just think,' she said, 'when Sonia and Pauline begin their work in Cawnpore I shall be in Heaven.' Then, regretting that her life was to end so soon she began to weep, saying: 'But I did want to *work* for Jesus.' The Mother comforted her with the assurance that Jesus would give her work to do. Thinking of the rather dreaded preliminary examination which the three were to have taken on their arrival at the Hospital, Nepali exclaimed, smiling, 'Now the angels will examine me.'

As the girls were singing:

Safe, safe upon the ever-shining Shore,
Sin, pain, and death, and sorrow all are o'er,
Happy now and evermore,
Washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

Nepali herself began to sing in a thick, almost inaudible voice:

Oh, I'm climbing up the golden stair to Glory.

It was a chorus they all loved, and had always sung with merry hearts. As the girls took it up softly, the

words gathered a fuller, deeper meaning. Nepali smiled, then the poison began to do its last deadly work. She could no longer speak, and with one last sweet smile she passed on to her Higher Service.

Snakes rarely get into the Compound. Nepali's was the only life endangered during the more than twenty years that it has been the Children's Home. Was it perhaps necessary that she should suffer and pass onward, that those still in darkness might have light? For the first time in their lives the big girls had seen a Christian die. Nepali's cheerful resignation, her assurance and peace, even in great agony, was for them quite a new experience.

Nepali's grave was the first made in the small plot reserved for that purpose in the grove behind the Home. Hers was also the first Christian funeral to take place in the district. The friendly people stood around and listened. Never does the Christian burial service seem so grand and full of hope as when read beside a grave in a heathen land.

'Do you really believe she will go to a place of peace and rise again in so beautiful a way?' asked many whose only idea about life after death was of another existence in the body of an animal or insect.

'Do you believe a *girl* will go to Heaven?' asked Mohammedans, who never credited a girl or woman with a soul at all.

The words of sure and certain hope in the resurrection songs sung at Nepali's Funeral and Memorial Service took on a new and different meaning for the girls.

Months afterwards, in speaking about her death, they expressed surprise that it had never once occurred to them to beat their breasts and wail the awful death-wail.

'I wonder why?' said the Mother.

'I think it was because we *knew* where her spirit had gone to,' said Nishtani.

Nishtani was lying flat on her back with her hands under her head, looking up at the blue sky all flecked with fleecy white clouds. 'I remember when my mother died,' she continued, 'we were all so frightened; we wailed and screamed because we were afraid her spirit would go into some of the animals near us, and we wanted to drive it far away. We knew nothing then about a Home above the bright blue sky.' Instantly the girls who were sitting and lying nearby began to sing:

I love to think of the Heavenly Land,
The greetings there we'll meet,
The harps—the songs for every one
Who walks the golden street.

'But why,' urged the Mother gently, 'did you want to drive the spirit far away? We should be happy to feel Nepali was near us and helping us, if she could.'

'Oh, *that's* different! Nepali is happy, and we know we cannot hurt *her*; but if a spirit came into a dog, or a cat, or a goat, how did we know that some one would not beat the animal, or kill it and drive the spirit out and into another creature?'

'Of course you did not know; but if the spirit went far away it would be just as bad.'

'Not at all!' exclaimed several girls at once; 'it might have gone upwards into a bird, or a monkey, or a squirrel, and in India we do not kill these; but we used to be horribly frightened when the Sahibs shot birds.'

They were all silent for a time. One explained their thoughts at last in her own words: 'It's like when you have been carrying loads on your head all day, and you hear the work is finished.' And she started singing:

Gone is my burden, He's rolled it away,
Opened my eyes to the light of the day;
Now in the fullness of joy I can say,
I'm happy, I'm happy in Jesus.

The others joined in, beating a tattoo on their buckets with which they had been watering their flower-gardens. Truly most of these girls had passed 'from death unto life.'

The epidemic of influenza that about this time swept the world surged up and reach the Home. It laid the children helpless, as a lawn-mower does the daisies in spring, till the only people on their feet were the Mother, the English Captain, the Patani Nurse, and Rewa and Rhuani. The two last-named little ones of four years were always called 'the twins,' though there was an utter lack of resemblance in anything but their age.

The three Officers were more than fully occupied in nursing the teachers and children, and in supplying medicine to the village people. The twins kept themselves busy, giving water to patients, sweeping up, straightening beds, trying in every way to help. Little pictures of unwashed, uncombed cheerfulness they were—two dots of joy always springing up in most unexpected places.

At first the landmen from the village had come in to wash up cups and plates and saucepans; but one by one they also fell sick and had to be nursed. One evening the Mother went to lead prayers in the school and the nurse to keep watch in the workroom (these two big rooms having been turned into wards), while the Captain went away to attack the washing-up. When she reached the kitchen, her heart suddenly sank. Water was slopped all over the floor, making it like a mud pond; aluminium saucepans and every cup and plate were more sooty and muddy inside than they had ever been outside; in the midst of all the twins stood, covered in mud and soot from crown to sole.

'We have done all the washing-up, Bai,' they exclaimed happily.

'Oh, you dear little lotus-buds, with your roots still

in the mud ! Now you must let me bath you and put you to bed,' said the Captain.

She led them to the well, where she made the best of a difficult job with cold water. Not that the twins or any one else in India objected to cold water ; but even in hot climates grease and soot are hard to remove. As quickly as possible the Captain put the twins securely to bed in her own room, then returned and cleaned up the kitchen.

' We did all the washing-up last night, and Bai was so pleased,' the twins told the Mother next morning.

' You are dear and good little girls. I am going to have prayers earlier to-night, and you must come and help me to sing. Then you can go and help Bai wash up afterwards,' said the Mother.

Some of the girls having had very mild attacks of illness, a week later they were able to get up and assist with the more severe cases. The only serious developments were among children who had been far gone with incurable disease before the epidemic broke out. Seven of these reached Heaven within a week of one another, a few months earlier than they might have gone if there had been no ' flu ' to hasten them onwards.

How did they pass into the City of God ?—these children whom men had deemed to be ' untouchable,' children who had been scorned and taught that they were of less value than bull calves ! To the women and children left watching, the passing of each little soul was like the opening of the door of a dark room into one flooded with sunshine. Some glorious rays came through and remained, making the Home for ever a sunnier place.

The bright, intelligent eyes of the little sufferers looking lovingly into the eyes of those who soothed and cheered them, were suddenly lifted upwards ; ineffable smiles spread over the emaciated faces, and the souls had passed.

‘Wonderful!’ the Mother exclaimed. ‘Our faces are the last they see on earth, our arms the last to hold them, then they go straight into the arms of Jesus! Think of the stories they will have to tell Him!’

Deep gratitude filled the hearts of the Officers as they realized to what high honour and privilege their own consecration vows had led them.

Carrying a little lifeless body in her arms (no one else was well enough) through fields of grain drying up and dying, because all the men were too sick to water them, the Mother arrived one evening at the little lonely cemetery. She must take turns with an old man—the only person whom the epidemic left at liberty—in digging a grave, and keeping howling jackals off the little body.

Leaving the old man to finish the last of the deep digging, she sat down to hold for the last time the winsome child. Never had she seen one with a sweeter face or such pretty lashes. She was trying to forget the present by wondering what the little fellow’s resurrection body would be like.

Then she saw him!—in the air, with Jesus and a crowd of glorified children she had known in India and other lands. All were beautiful beyond any power of earth to describe, and the small Timothy, whose lifeless body lay on her lap, was leading the Lord to the place where she was sitting.

The lovely vision held her soul in rapture till the voice of the old man saying: ‘It is ready, Miss-Sahiba, shall I lay him in for you?’ brought her back to the realities of earth.

‘Thank you,’ she replied mechanically. Having helped to lower the body into the grave, she sank down, dropped her head into her arms and sat motionless while he filled in the tiny grave. Light and darkness follow each other quickly in the East; night had already fallen. The darkness served but to accentuate that vision, ‘clearer

than the noon-day', and to make ' the Glory of the Lord,' a reward that could be felt.

* * * *

' What an awful time you must have had ! ' exclaimed a sympathetic friend months afterwards.

' It was a rather strenuous time,' replied the Mother, quietly, and began to talk of other things.

CHAPTER XIV

DIFFICULT DAYS

DIFFICULT days had come. Food was scarce. Through the war and the epidemic quite necessary articles were unobtainable. Most of the children understood why, and while they made plenty of uncomplimentary remarks about the purchasers, and cooks, and those who served the food, they did not grumble or allow themselves to grow miserable, which was a very great tribute to their changed natures. For these children had never gone short of good things to eat before in their lives.

New girls in the Home were learning new things slowly. The perfect confidence that existed between the Home staff and the older children quickly dispelled any fears with which any may have come possessed, and were as quickly succeeded by a desire to be a part of the family and help all they could without breaking caste.

One night, when the unclouded moon was full, four recent arrivals came to the Mother's bedside and apologized for waking her.

'Is any one sick?' asked the Mother, getting up immediately.

'No. But see—we are all short girls, and just beyond our own fields is a field of rice quite ripe. Open the doors and let us go out. We can hide in the high straw and bring in enough rice for many nursery dinners,' said the girls.

'And the children *would* enjoy some good rice dinners!' exclaimed the Mother.

'We are none of us big; we can easily get in among the rice and fill our saris with ripe ears,' and they showed their saris dexterously arranged to hold the grain.

'Thank you, ever so much; it is kind of you to want to help me. I am so glad you came and suggested the plan; but don't let us do it to-night; I'll think it over,' said the Mother; and she continued: 'I am so tired and sleepy now. Get back to bed like good girls, and instead of going to school to-morrow morning you shall come to my room, and we'll talk it over. Don't tell anybody else.'

Somewhat disappointed, but satisfied for the time being, the girls returned to bed.

Next morning the Mother spent several hours trying to teach the four girls the meaning of the eighth Commandment. The new idea was as elusive and hard for them to grasp and hold as are the first notes of music which a boy essays to produce on a cornet. Much more easily did they grasp that it was against the *custom* of Christians to do that kind of work, and that it would spoil the Home name. For the time being, this thought prevented their trying to appropriate anything which was not the Home's by right.

As yet unconvinced of the sin of stealing, they joined the family for the midday meal.

'Say grace, Dolari,' called out the big girl who had served out the food. The children rose, their plates in their hands, and closed their eyes, while Corps Cadet Dolari prayed: 'O Lord Jesus, You know we are all tired of this kind of food; it is horrible stuff. Please stop the war, so that we can have the food we used to have; but we are very glad—I mean we are trying to be glad—that we have even this, while so many people have nothing. Please make us truly glad for the sake of Your Glory. Amen.'

Foreign rice and Australian wheat were 'anathema'

to the children. The best cooks could not prevent the former becoming a sticky conglomeration, with more resemblance to porridge than to any kind of boiled rice they had ever known. The grinding of tough Australian wheat on their hand grindstones was doubly hard work.

‘Take a piece of charcoal along and blot Australia off the map!’ called out a girl, grinding and perspiring, to a teacher on her way to the schoolroom.

‘Then you’ll get no bread at all,’ replied the teacher, cheerfully, as she passed on.

‘I wish the war would stop. May I write a letter to the District Magistrate?’ said Nolini to the Mother, as she also came past.

‘Certainly.’

‘But will you pass it on without reading it?’

‘If you wish me to do so I will.’

‘Then I’ll write.’

Days passed, and there was much talk about Nolini’s projected letter, but it did not get written. One day the District Magistrate suddenly turned up at the Home.

He was always most kind to the girls and took a very real interest in them. After he had completed his round of inspection, and was chatting with a group in their workroom, the Mother said that Nolini wanted to write him a confidential letter.

‘Well, what is it, Nolini? Would you like to tell me what you want now?’ he asked, encouragingly.

‘Yes, Sahib,’ replied Nolini, lifting her cocoon out of the water, and drying her hands and removing her apron.

‘Come along then, we’ll have a little walk,’ said the Magistrate Sahib, leading her away.

The Mother looked after them as she crossed the Compound, and saw Nolini vigorously emphasizing her words with her hands. She wondered what the new idea could be.

‘Who teaches the girls botany?’ asked the Sahib a

little later, taking the cup of tea offered to him, and helping himself to bread and butter.

'Nobody. It is not one of our subjects,' replied the Mother.

The Magistrate lifted his eyebrows, dropped the corners of his mouth, and remarked: 'That girl Nolini knows how to distil the most deadly poison from herbs growing in your Compound.'

'Really?' said the Mother, wondering if ever the depths of the children's inherited knowledge would be fathomed; 'and she often cooks for us.'

'I shouldn't offend her if I were you,' laughed the District Magistrate. But he added comfortingly, 'They are all far too devoted to you and your staff to do you any harm.'

The Mother was aching to know what Nolini's request had been, but she did not mean to inquire. Accepting another cup of tea the Sahib said: 'I only wish I could do what she asked me, if it would produce the result she thinks it would.' He laughed heartily and continued: 'She would like me to arrange for her to go and help to cook in a certain European court. She thinks she could quietly do her distilling and, by placing a few drops into the food, put the Ruler and all his Court out of action and so stop the war.'

'What is the use of a District Magistrate if he cannot arrange a simple thing like that!' said the Mother, merrily.

'Great Methuselah!' exclaimed the Sahib, who was a keen botanist, 'but she understands herbs all right; she has given me a lot of light on a few matters quite unconnected with the war.'

'Do you realize,' asked the Mother, 'that her knowledge on that subject was gained before she was ten years old?'

'It seems incredible,' he replied, 'and yet sometimes

we call these people uneducated, and even uncivilized. I don't know that understanding how to poison people is a hallmark of civilization though,' he said

'Not unless it is done in wholesale fashion—with gas,' said the Mother, pointedly; 'but to know how to distil is rather an accomplishment.'

'Quite so,' agreed the Sahib. 'Meantime you must keep Nolini cheerful,' he concluded, 'while she learns that even the might of the District Magistrate has limitations,' and he rose and took his leave.

'Did the Sahib tell you what I asked him?' inquired Nolini under the neem tree that night.

'Yes,' replied the Mother.

'Will he send me?'

'He couldn't. No ship could get near where you want to go. How did you learn to distil poison?'

'Oh, everybody knows.'

'Everybody does not. I don't.'

'Truly?'

'No! In our country we leave that kind of knowledge to doctors and chemists.'

'But if you wanted to kill somebody?'

'We never do want to kill people.'

'But you would have to, sometimes, or they would kill you.'

'Well!' The Mother drew a deep breath. 'I never lived in the jungle, and you will not any more, so there is no need to remember about killing people. But lots of useful medicines are made from poisons. Perhaps some day, Nolini, you will help to make medicines.'

'The compounder in our hospital was like that; she knew many things before she ever went to school,' put in one of the nurses.

'It is valuable knowledge. You must remember it, Nolini, and some day you may use it to keep people alive instead of killing them,' said the Mother.

'Does medicine drive out spirits?' asked a new girl.

'No. Medicine helps to make sick people well.'

'Sickness,' explained the nurse, 'is not evil spirits in people; it is trouble in their own bodies.'

'Then how stupid it is to beat drums and make a great noise to keep evil spirits away, as they do when there is plague or smallpox in the village.'

'If it makes the people stop thinking about the disease and getting frightened, it may be useful.'

'That's true,' exclaimed a very new big girl; 'some people who are never frightened never get anything, and others who get frightened get everything.'

'Like Payari,' put in another girl, and everybody laughed.

For some time before Piyari had heard that plague was in the village, and while at her machine she fell down and began moaning. 'She has the plague, she has the plague!' exclaimed a dozen voices in all degrees of fright.

'Piyari, stand up and get on with your work,' sternly commanded the Mother. Piyari looked up, most painfully self-sympathetic.

'Did—you—hear—what—I—said? *Get up,*' again commanded the Mother.

Piyari staggered to her feet.

'Begin your work at once, girls; there is smallpox in the village, not plague this time,' said the Mother.

The group burst into a merry laugh, and Piyari went crestfallen to her machine. By midday she was laughing as heartily at herself as the other girls were.

'But I really thought I had it,' she said.

'And would have thought so till you died of it, if you had been left alone,' said a Nurse.

'That, surely, is why they beat drums and make a noise—to help people to think of other things,' said the other Nurse.

Good Friday was approaching. The Spirit of Intercession fell upon the staff and girls in a wonderful way. Quiet and subdued they went about their daily tasks, looking forward to the 'Day at the Cross' with great expectation. They were not disappointed. The Day came, and among the six big girls seen at the penitential-form were three of the four new girls who had wanted to go out and bring in the rice from the neighbour's field.

Difficult days are days of growth.

CHAPTER XV

OH, COME, LET US ADORE HIM

THAT Easter, the return home of the two girl-nurses for their first holiday was an occasion of great rejoicing. Their departure for the Hospital had been rather overshadowed by the passing of their comrade Nepali. But the monthly reports on them that had since arrived from the Sister-in-Charge, had been good and encouraging.

A tremendous ovation greeted their appearance on the Saturday night. There were new girls whom they had not seen ; there were the smaller girls whom they had previously taught and taken care of, and who had missed them sorely, and there were the Officers and staff, all eager to hear about their new experiences. Their presence at all the Meetings on Sunday was an inspiration, and their testimonies showed how much they had grown in their own spiritual life. A holiday was given in their honour, and a picnic arranged.

Kindly landowners lent their elephants, camels, carriages, coolies, and ekas.* Thus mounted or riding, over one hundred children, teachers, and Officers started out for a mango grove, eight miles away. No prettier sight could be imagined than the line of camels carrying the big girls in their red and yellow dresses ; the elephants, their huge backs covered only with a blanket, crowded with merry little nursery people ; the palanquins bearing girls not strong enough for jolting ; the ekas filled with brothers and sisters, cheering wildly as

* Two wheeled vehicles.

their bony horses careered past the more slowly moving animals, until the whole procession came to a halt and settled down to a jolly picnic feast.

Eating, and games, and naps of sleep filled up the hours till the sun and moon changed duty, and the return journey began. The long cavalcade in the light of a full eastern moon was fascinatingly beautiful. Up through the branches of the trees that lined nearly all the homeward way, and up beyond the stars, floated the music of the children's voices as they sang together with melodious harmony :

Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine,
And blessings more than we can give,
Be, Lord, for ever Thine !

Hallelujah to the Lamb, who died on Mount Calvary !
Hallelujah ! Hallelujah ! Hallelujah ! Amen.

So Easter passed. The Nurses returned to their Hospital, taking two more girl probationers with them. At the same time Mary and one other went into training for Kindergarten Teachers. So the months rolled by until Christmas again loomed ahead.

The girls were sitting under the tree, practising new carols, one evening, when a messenger came to say the police had brought in two new children. The Mother went to receive them.

A frightened little girl of about five years was trying to efface herself behind a tree. Two huge Mohammedan policemen handed over documents, and a bundle containing what appeared to be a baby, much more dead than alive. Wrapped up forty-eight hours previously, the tiny 'untouchable' had indeed not been touched, except to be given drinks of milk, during all those hours.

As quickly as possible the Mother dismissed the policemen, handed the small girl over to the nursery tribe, who were very skilful at dispelling the fears of new-

comers, and herself attended to the baby. She found her to be a child of, perhaps, two years old, weak, wizened, and hungry, who whined piteously every time she was touched. For a month the carolling went on out in the Compound, the favourite piece being the English rendering of :

Oh, come let us adore Him.

The new baby, kept on the Officers' veranda for her better care, continued to whine and moan whenever she was fed or washed. Every two hours, night and day, a few spoonfuls of nourishment were inveigled between her unwilling little lips. But to all smiling blandishments and chatter she only responded with frowns and pitiful cries. The most hopeful of her retinue of willing servants could not see any improvement in her wizened little body.

A pretty custom has grown up in all Army Indian Institutions ; the children rise early on Christmas morning and sing to their Officers and teachers. Expecting this, the Mother and her two Captains arranged to occupy one room together on Christmas Eve.

Very early in the morning, before it was light, they were awakened ; a single voice somewhere near seemed trying to sing.

'Some of the nursery tribe, out to steal a march on the others,' said a Captain, going to the door, fully expecting to see the irrepressible twins ; but she found no one.

'Little mischiefs,' she exclaimed, returning to bed, 'they are hiding somewhere and it is too dark to see them.'

'I'll go,' said the other Captain.

She went and returned with the same result. While sitting on their beds, all three now thoroughly awake, the little voice was heard again, and the Captain declared, 'It must be the baby !' She was in the same room.

The three women simultaneously sprang to the baby's side and lifted up the coverlet, down under which she had wriggled herself. Smiling seraphically, and playing with her fingers, she was singing with the sweetest English accent, to no tune at all: 'dore Him, 'dore Him, Come and 'dore Him.'

Softly the three women joined in, though rather gulpingly, 'Oh, come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!' Perhaps their own worship had never been more real.

Later that Christmas morning the five-year-old sister was brought to see her baby sister smile. She stood for a few minutes, laughing happily, then before any one could guess her thoughts she dropped on the ground, threw her arms round the Officer's feet and began to kiss them. It was the only way she knew of expressing the feelings of her grateful little heart.

The Captain led her back to the nursery, where she promptly told the others that 'when she got big she would kill a lot of people and get their money and jewellery, and then give it to the Mother and Captains for making her baby sister smile.' The baby smiled on. Whining and pain passed away, and soon no sweeter, healthier baby could be found.

Every other Christmas the children had received presents for themselves. This year of the 'flu' epidemic, however, there originated among them the idea that in gratitude for all God's goodness through the war and the sickness, they ought to send gifts to others less well off than themselves.

In their spare time everything possible had been done, with great vigour and ingenuity, to raise money. Drawn-thread work, embroidery, knitting, crochet, jam-making, darning, dressmaking, shirt-making, all the crafts they had learned since coming to the Home were employed in the very best way, and the finished work, being good, sold rapidly.

Great discussions had often been held concerning what should be done with the money. Finally it was decided that the thank-offering should go to help disabled Indian soldiers and their families.

Kind friends had, as usual, contributed gifts and a feast for the children. The wife of the High Court Judge, with a number of other friends, was invited to present these gifts. She would also receive the children's thank-offering. They were to march past the assembled guests and lay their gifts on a table placed for the purpose in front of the presiding lady.

Even the Mother and staff did not know how much money the girls had, or would give. They only knew that the Treasurer of the Thasildar's Court had been asked to exchange all notes and coins for brand new silver, which he had willingly done; and that the big girls had given each of the small girls a silver coin.

The march began, led by the tallest girl. As she reached the lady she stopped, saluted, made a concise little speech explaining their plan, then placed on the table a brass plate, polished till it resembled beaten gold, and on it her own gift.

'Clink! Clink! Clink! went the new silver coins into the plate as the children saluted and passed by. The guests were first interested, then impressed, next moved. All were standing, and many openly wiping their eyes, when the nursery tribe, happily dropping their shining coins into the already full plate, brought the long line to an end. One hundred and five rupees (£7), may not seem a big sum to people in Western lands; but the lady who received it, and the other guests, knew Indian conditions well enough to be overwhelmed with surprise that these once untaught children had, by their own unaided efforts, been able to raise so large a sum in their leisure hours.

The girls formed up in line again and returned to give

a display of their school drills. Having moved their guests to tears over their willing offering, they now had them in convulsions of laughter as, with suitable actions, they sang to the old ' Jolly Miller ' tune :

There is a jolly Home not very far away,
From which we all have come, come, come !
We work and play the livelong day,
And there is lots of fun, fun, fun !

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha !
Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho !

Some girls just eat, and sleep, and eat,
And we have to make them run, run, run !
To see their faces when the work bell rings,
Oh, dear, it is such fun, fun, fun !

Some girls love work, can you believe ?
They'd weep if there was none, none, none !
And we confess, that most of us,
Just love a lot of fun, fun, fun !

They laughed in time and harmony so naturally as they repeated the chorus that the guests joined in, and long laughter took possession of everybody. The High Court Judge and two Barristers-at-Law were seen mopping their faces as they went aside to recover control. Presents were distributed, tea served, sweets literally showered on the children, and a long-to-be-remembered day ended.

' Bless those children ! I cannot recall a jollier Christmas Day since I was a boy,' said the Judge six months afterwards.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GIRLS VISIT THEIR RELATIONS

THE first of all the girls to return from her place of training and be appointed to the Home Staff was Elizabeth. Always a favourite with the nursery tribe from the beginning, she most successfully combined the qualities of big sister and teacher. The next to come back was Sunshine, now a fully qualified Nurse with the rank of Lieutenant. There was no limit to the joy of the Officers and staff as one by one the girls, trained and full of zeal, began to help in the teaching and training of others.

It was Sunshine who, as we have told, had been so eager when a child to go to her own parents with the message of Salvation. The time had now arrived for the Mother's promise to be put into practice, for the parents were now liberated from prison and living in an Army Settlement. Beside Sunshine, seven other girls had parents in the same Settlement, and relations whom they had not seen during the ten years since they had first come to the Home. Arrangements were made with the Officers-in-Charge of that Settlement for the eight girls to go and spend a few days with their people.

'Tell the relations,' wrote the Mother, 'that if they let the children return happily, according to agreement, the children will pay them a yearly visit.'

The Officer replied that he had explained these matters. Since the hour he had told their people, he had

been constantly held up with questions regarding the visit, excitement rising daily.

It could not be said that the girls were excited. Every one of the eight felt heavily the responsibility of going back as messengers of Jesus to parents they had left as caste-bound heathen. Filial love that had lain dormant during the years of separation began to assert itself; but was overwhelmed by a fear lest their parents should not be glad to see them again as Christians. This three-fold emotion—hope, love, and dread—made the girls as unlike their natural selves as clouds are unlike a clear blue sky. The Mother cheered and encouraged them as they drew near the station:

‘When you arrive in the Settlement you will be free to go where you like till Meeting time,’ she said, ‘then *you* will take the Meeting. Lieutenant Sunshine will lead, and afterwards you will all come to the Officers’ bungalow and sleep on the veranda with me.’

‘Take the Meeting! Oh, my ancestors!’ exclaimed the Lieutenant, and added: ‘But, Mother, you will come, and go on if I cannot, won’t you?’

‘I shall be there, but you will go on,’ replied the Mother smiling.

On the journey each child carried her own Bible in her bag, and her favourite portion in her hand.

Nearly eight years of daily use had worn the school Bibles badly. The local secretary of the Bible Society had generously provided new Bibles for school use. The old ones had been carefully cut up and the portions that were complete nicely bound, in strong paper, and distributed among the girls who could read. These rebound volumes became very popular. No story was ever more read by a family of children than the one these girls knew as ‘Joseph and his Brethren,’ consisting of Genesis xxxvii. 50, and Exodus i. 15. The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah were also much in demand.

'Isaiah makes you want to sing, and Jeremiah makes you want to cry,' Mary exclaimed one day, as she sat hugging her knees under a mulberry bush.

'Then why do you read Jeremiah?' asked a girl who was not fond of reading.

'Because when I think about *our* people I want to weep just as he did over his people,' replied Mary.

The train was not crowded, and the girls, some sitting, some lying, were all reading these portions. They felt rather subdued and not too cheerful. Suddenly the Lieutenant, who had been lying full length on the seat, sprang up singing:

Oh, the burden of my heart has rolled away,
Happy day, happy day!
The burden I was bearing rolled away,
Happy day, happy day!

The others looked at her none too graciously and went on with their reading.

'Girls!' exclaimed the Lieutenant, in a most cheerful voice, 'listen to this.'

Seven pairs of eyes were turned towards her, while the hands held the places where their owners had been reading.

'We are going to have a great time,' she began, 'just as we used to in England and Sweden. Listen! we are the Lord's little gardens, and He says, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in Me; who would set the briars and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them. I would burn them together. Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace"' (Isa. xxvii. 3-5).

The girls had often spent hours arranging briars and thorns around little trees they had planted to prevent animals and other enemies destroying them. It was also

a common way of protecting a chicken from being carried away by kites and crows.

'Didn't we try to put briars and thorns around ourselves the week before we all got saved?' exclaimed the Lieutenant; 'and didn't the Lord come through them and save us in spite of all our barriers?'

By this time the books were closed and the girls alert, following the Lieutenant's words.

'Of course; but we thought then that God was an angry enemy,' said Mary.

'Perhaps that is what our people will be thinking; but we need have no fear,' said the Lieutenant.

'No,' said the Mother quietly, 'you must do now what the staff and teachers did for you—take hold of God's strength for yourselves and pray for your people.'

'Let us have a Prayer Meeting here,' exclaimed the Lieutenant, and quite unabashed by the presence of a few other passengers, the girls put aside their books, knelt down, and wrestled with God for the dark souls in the Settlement.

'Lord,' prayed one girl, 'begin now and burn up the briars and thorns they have ever kept round themselves to keep Thee away. Oh, make our words as sparks of fire. We did not know Thee, and were afraid. They did not know Thee, and were afraid when we last saw them. Oh, let them feel that Thou art with us. Show Thy love to them through us.'

Eight heads, each out of a separate carriage window, scanned eagerly the platform, hoping to see parents and relations, as the train drew into the station. No one was there but the Settlement Officer. A long-drawn 'O—o—oh' of surprise, mingled with disappointment one minute; the next the Officer was helping them to alight and gather up their luggage, explaining that he had arranged for conveyances to take them to the Settlement, as it was rather at a distance.

A little later they reached the gates. Uproarious cheers greeted their arrival. The girls were literally dragged off the conveyances, and passed from hand to hand like helpless infants, as parents and relations looked for their own particular child.

Tears and smiles, greetings and weepings, exclamations and comparisons followed. Every girl was separated in the hubbub and carried off by her own crowd of relations, to be questioned and minutely inspected and inveigled into eating enough food for four !

The Mother went alone to the Officers' bungalow, where she prayed, waited, and wondered. Much had happened since the girls had left their old life. To all appearances they were both outwardly and inwardly new creatures. But the change had not taken place in their natural surroundings, and though she had done all a woman could do to make the best of the unavoidable situation, she did not believe in girls growing up apart from their brothers ; nor in spiritual life being too much protected from the cold blasts of the world, in which women must live if they are to fulfil their high destiny.

Just what effect would the first collision with outside influences, now taking place, have upon the girls who were as dear to her as life ? ' They are all my spiritual children ; ten years I have had them ! ' she exclaimed to herself, looking back over the years, recounting the battles, struggles—yes, and literally the stand-up fights she had had with the Devil for their souls.

' Florence ! Ah, how will Florence stand ? ' she asked herself, and almost trembled at past memories. But Florence had not looked back since, three years before, she and the Mother had spent a night together, fighting a battle to the finish.

' Florence,' the Mother had said on that occasion, as she put her back to the door, ' I am going to keep you

here and pray with you. If you do not give in to-night, to-morrow you must return to the Settlement.'

'You cannot send me back without an order,' said Florence, impertinently.

'The order is here,' said the Mother, and showed it to the girl.

Florence took the paper and deliberately tore it up and scattered the pieces.

'I thought you wanted to go back to your own people,' said the Mother.

'I don't now,' said Florence. 'I shall stay here or somewhere in The Salvation Army till I have killed that Officer. She blamed me for what I did not do, and got me a bad name. I shall not get saved, I shall be as wicked as I can. I *will* kill her, and then I can die.'

'Rather stupid of you,' said the Mother. 'The Officer did probably make a mistake, but God will not keep her out of Heaven for that, and if you send her there before He is ready for her, He will punish you for doing it. Think of all the trouble you are having already through letting your anger grow and grow and grow.'

'Of course it's growing. I have consecrated myself to the Devil. You taught us how to consecrate ourselves to God. In the same way I have done it now to the Devil.'

The Mother, still with her back to the door, began to pray. The girl sitting on the floor in front of her began to jabber. The Mother wept silently, the girl laughed hysterically. The Mother sang for her own support the verse and chorus of: 'I need Thee, oh, I need Thee.' The girl sat and tore the Mother's Bible into bits!

So the awful hours passed, and it seemed to the Mother as if the Devil was going to triumph, and she could hold out no more. The girl suddenly rose up, her face

ashen with passion, lifted her hand, and struck the Mother several blows on each side of her face.

'Oh, Florence!' gasped the Mother, with tears raining down, and from sheer exhaustion sank in a heap on the floor and wept freely.

For a few minutes, that seemed like hours, the girl stood looking on. She asked: 'Don't you hate me now?'

'No,' said the Mother, 'have I not taught you that Jesus loves us in spite of our sins? Alas! I have done worse things than that to Jesus—but He loves me still and I am trying to be like Him.'

The girl dropped down beside the Mother and twisted her neck to peer into the elder woman's face. The Mother smiled! Florence asked awestruck: 'Do you still *love* me?'

Then it seemed as though an awful presence left the room. Florence threw herself upon the floor, and with her head on the Mother's lap wept, and wept, and wept. The memories of all the naughty things she had done, crowned with the last two—the destruction of the Mother's Bible, and the striking of her face—swept over her heart in billows of sorrow.

Two hours passed before she could be persuaded to exercise any faith for herself; but as the morning broke, hope returned, and a knowledge of the pardoning love of Jesus dawned in her heart. When later Bai—who had never once lost her patience, or failed the girls—came with some tea for the Mother, she found them sleeping on the floor, side by side, holding each other's hands.

While the Mother was sitting quietly in the bungalow, the girls of her memories were out among their own people—Florence; Mary—whose last ten years included visits to Simla, the long, long journey to Europe, and a year in a very up-to-date American Training School—

and the Lieutenant, a fully qualified and scrupulously clean Nurse. How would they feel in the old chimneyless houses, reeking with the smoke of cow-dung fuel ; listening to a dialect most of them had forgotten and none of them could speak ?

‘ Like to come round and have a look at them ? They seem to have all found their own people ? ’ called the Settlement Officer through the window. ‘ The relations are *all* asking for you to go and eat with them ; but I’ve settled that by telling them I’m not going to be robbed of my guest.’

‘ Thank you,’ said the Mother gratefully ; ‘ I really couldn’t eat in eight houses ! ’

‘ And if you did in one only, you would upset the others,’ he replied.

‘ What a picture for the angels ! ’ he exclaimed presently, and pointed to the Lieutenant surrounded by a crowd of men, women, and children, sitting, squatting, and standing about in every possible attitude, all asking questions. Every eye was on the girl ; no one took the least notice of the Officer and Mother. They passed on to find seven more ‘ pictures,’ almost exactly the same.

‘ A little leaven ! A little leaven ! ’ remarked the Officer, partly to the Mother, but mostly to himself, as they returned to the bungalow for the evening meal.

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CHAPTER XVII

NEW LEAVEN

PUNCTUALLY to the minute, the girls arrived at the bungalow ready for the Meeting.

‘Will all the Settlers come?’ the Mother asked the Officer.

‘We always have a good proportion of them, and there will be more to-night,’ was the reply; but as they reached the Hall he exclaimed: ‘Looks as if the whole crowd is coming!’

Five hundred men and women, besides children, were sitting on the clean mud-washed floor as the Officer, Mother, and girls took their places on the small platform. A mighty cheer greeted the Lieutenant as she rose to commence the Meeting. The singing that followed was truly wonderful. Punctuated by dogs barking, goats baa-ing, a child shrieking, the men with their deep voices and women in shriller tones did as they had been urged to do—‘Sing, and never mind the tune.’

On Armistice Day in great cities comes a silence that is never known at any other time. Such a silence fell when, with closed eyes and outstretched hands, Mary rose and poured out her earnest little soul in burning words of prayer for her beloved people. She seemed to forget they were before her; she was so truly taking hold of God’s strength in faith for their Salvation.

No one had helped the girls to prepare for the Meeting. They had been left entirely to their own resources.

'You would all like to hear something about our visit to England,' said the Lieutenant. 'First we will show you how the Bands play. They are always obliged to have a leader standing in front of them with a stick in his hand to keep them in order. Halimi will be our leader.'

Out from Halimi's sleeve came a short, thick bamboo.

Once, while on a visit to England, the School Mother had seen a certain famous octet showing an English audience how the singing of the Indian girls had appealed to them. She now had a deep, impossible desire that those eight bandsmen could see Halimi and her brigade showing their own people how Bandmasters in England led their bands!

The girls responded without a suspicion of a smile to every superbly mimicked gesture of baton, body, and hands. Their 'instruments' made up of paper and split bamboo were a cornet, trombone, bass, tenor-horn, and drum. The music would have made English musicians weep with anguish; the audience wept with mirth long after Bandmaster Halimi, with a last flourish, brought her baton smartly to her side.

Testimonies followed, till the Lieutenant rose, Bible in hand, and gave her first public address as an Officer in The Salvation Army. Reading verses here and there, she told the story of Joseph, of the long years of his separation from his family.

'It has been like that with us,' said this girl of nineteen years; 'Joseph's brothers were naughty; they sold him for money because they were jealous, which is one kind of sin; but God took care of Joseph, and afterwards used him to save his people from dying of famine. Our families committed other kinds of sin which caused us to be separated from them, but God has taken care of us, and instead of your coming to us, as Joseph's family went to him for bread, we have come back to you

with the Bread of Life in our hands and hearts. Jesus is that Bread. If you will accept Him and feed your souls and minds on Him, you will not commit sin, and all the troubles you have had because of wrongdoing will come to an end.'

She told of her own conversion ; told how the darkness of her mind slowly passed, till she at last understood the teaching that as many as received Jesus, received power to overcome the sinful desires of the heart.

'Oh, I have longed intensely to come and tell you,' she cried ; 'and now I am here, and it is true, it is all true !' She turned helplessly to the Mother, exclaiming 'But they don't know the meaning of truth,' and sat down and wept.

The Mother rose and pleaded with the people to come and pray. 'Don't you understand ?' she asked them. 'Ah ! I remember when the girls did not understand. They learned what they know by believing a little at a time, and they will go on learning in the same way. Come and begin to serve the God who has been so good to you all.'

Some of her listeners had already accepted Jesus as their Saviour in Settlement Meetings. Others came and prayed ; names were registered, but not in these circumstances do heathen souls come fully into the Light. The seed is planted, but much watering and tender care is necessary before it bursts through the darkness of earthly superstitious bondage into the sunlight of realized Salvation. Perhaps in Heaven the angels' report of that Meeting will show it to have been the hour when, in many souls, the briars of doubt and unbelief and fear began to be destroyed, and the first movement made towards peace with God.

There was no Meeting the next evening ; the girls were told to come to the bungalow not later than half-past six for prayers before bedtime. They had spent a

full day and a half with their own people. The Mother was keen to hear their impressions.

They arrived in ones and twos.

'Mother, can we have a bath in the bungalow?' was the first question.

'Have you not had a bath?'

'No, how could we?'

'Goodness, girls. You had mothers and aunts and grandmothers enough to go with you to the well!'

'But, Mother, the well is in the middle of the Settlement!'

'I know, but all the other women and girls go there to bathe.'

'But *we* couldn't, Mother!'

'Nonsense, girls! What will you do when you go to live in villages?'

'We shall be married then, of course. Do you know, Mother, we are the only unmarried girls of our age in this Settlement.'

The Mother did know it, but she had not realized before quite all that it meant. She gave up the argument and made arrangements for bathing in the bungalow. There was only a curtain between her and the girls as they splashed and chattered merrily. Their remarks revealed much.

'Are not the sanitary arrangements awful?'

'It's lots worse in villages, though.'

'My ancestors! but I couldn't put up with it very long, could you?'

'You'll have to when you get married and go to live in a village?'

'In my mature judgment——' began Mary. Clearly a douche of water put a full stop to her remark!

Mary was by several years the youngest, and like all big sisters, the others treated her still as a child. She took it all in good part, but held on to her own opinions,

and expressed them when she could, mostly mixed with a little kindly sarcasm.

‘That last dash of water was delightful,’ she remarked. ‘I have now well lathered myself; will some one tip another bucketful over me, please?’

‘There’s no more water! I say, where’s the well?’

‘A mile and a half away, right in the middle of the Settlement.’

‘Mother! We’ve used all the water and have not finished bathing. What can we do?’

‘Put on your saris and go and get some more, my girls!’

‘Oh, we *can’t* go all that way.’

‘But if you want it you must; the well is not more than five minutes’ walk.’

Here the Mother pulled back the curtain and looked in. Eight girls, wrapped in dripping wet saris, several with their heads white with soap lather, were sitting in various postures on the cool stone floor of a good-sized bathroom.

‘Mother, please go and ask my father, he’ll fetch it,’ pleaded the Lieutenant. ‘And my brother and my——,’ began another.

But the Mother had gone, knowing well enough that a regiment of relations would gladly bring water on this occasion. Vessels full enough for a dozen baths were soon standing outside the door.

‘Why did you all wash your heads to-night?’ the Mother asked the girls, as they sat around her for the evening talk with their abundant, black, glossy hair falling about their shoulders to dry.

Loyalty held their tongues. Not a word of the reason escaped their lips, and no stranger would have guessed that the washing with strong carbolic soap—bought by the Nurse during the afternoon visit to the bazaar—was preparatory to a combing and searching for parasitic

life to which they had not been accustomed for the past ten years ; it was indeed a task as loathsome to them as to European girls.

They read the Sword and Shield portion for the day, and began to discuss just what cross-bearing meant.

‘I think it is going to be a heavy cross to live in villages,’ said Halimi quietly.

‘It is,’ said the Nurse, ‘even here, where our people all want us and are kind to us and love us ! See how glad we are to get back to the bungalow, where it is clean and we are away from all the eyes.’

‘But in a village you would have your own home,’ said the Mother.

‘One room ! to sleep in, to cook in, to eat in, and never to be able to shut the door !’

‘Why couldn’t you shut the door ?’

‘In the night we should be choked for want of air, and in the day with the smoke of the cooking.’

‘You will have to cook out of doors like the other people.’

‘When it rains ?’

The Mother gave up the argument.

Other drawbacks to village life were freely discussed. Mary probably put all their thoughts into words when she remarked sadly : ‘Sin and unrighteousness separated us from our parents, and caused us to be brought up as we have been. Now we shall never be happy to live as they do—and yet they will never be happy without us.’

‘Happiness comes from inside ourselves,’ said the Mother.

‘Oh, my ancestors ! How can any one be happy if she has not a little comfort !’ exclaimed Halimi.

‘One way of showing our love to God is to be happy where He places us,’ said the Mother ; but she realized vividly that for these girls to turn from the life they had lived in the Home, simple as it had been, and go back to

the villages, was going to be as great a sacrifice as any that European girls make in leaving their own homelands to go to India.

‘Lord,’ cried one girl, ‘You have promised to show mercy unto thousands of them that love Thee, and we love Thee. Oh, show Thy mercy to thousands through us!’

Not in the way they expected, but in other and far more wonderful ways is the prayer being answered—in measure full, pressed down and running over.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC

‘WHAT’S up here?’ asked a high-caste police official abruptly, as he saw a big crowd of untouchable criminal-caste people pouring on to the station platform next day.

‘Nothing much!’ replied the Settlement Officer, calmly; ‘they are only seeing a few children off to school.’

The police official walked suspiciously up and down the platform, keenly watching the eight girls, with the European woman they called Mother, being loaded with garlands, and fruits and sweets, by weeping mothers and sorrowful fathers. These parents knew why their children had been sent to the Home, and were full of gratitude and love to the European Salvationists who had taken care of them and had not destroyed their love for themselves. The break in the long separation had come at last, and they had found the children still their own. Different? Oh, yes! with a difference too great for their understanding; but they were proud to see their children, ‘just like Brahmins,’ as they expressed it; meaning that they mixed with Sahibs, could sit and walk and go anywhere, were able to read and write, preach and nurse, yet their girls still.

Many children in the Settlement got permission from their parents to go to day school as a result of that visit. All unconsciously the girls had dropped new ideas in the minds of hundreds of their people.

‘How can you pick out the different caste?’ is a

question often asked of older residents by newly-arrived Europeans. A few explanations given in reply usually finish with the remark: 'You'll learn by observing.' But the most astonishing thing learned by observation is that no matter how differently a convert to Christianity may have learned to dress, or behave, or may be educated, any Indian will know at sight what was his or her original caste.

The wide difference between the girls and their relations must have been a thought-provoking problem to the high-caste police official during many later hours. Perhaps nothing has done so much to wake up the souls of contemplative, self-satisfied Indians as the question: 'What makes the great and obvious change in these low-caste untouchable ones?'

The girls wore The Salvation Army uniform of saffron and red. They spoke excellent Urdu and English, and their girlish behaviour left nothing to be desired, either from an Indian or a Christian point of view. Yet on all that thirty-six hours' journey, in stations, trains, waiting-rooms, bazaars, all high-caste Indians knew them to be 'untouchables,' and were most careful not to touch them!

On the return journey, some difficulty was experienced in obtaining water. The Mother called a water-carrier whose bucket was labelled 'water for Hindoos.' He came and would have given a little to the English woman, but when he saw the water was wanted for the girls he picked up his bucket and walked haughtily away.

'Here is the Mussulman coming! Perhaps he will give us some,' exclaimed the Nurse. In her Nurse's uniform she stepped down and asked him politely to give her a little from his bucket labelled 'Water for Mohammedans.' Like his Hindoo brother he walked off, ignoring her as if she did not exist.

'Here is the Guard!' cried several girls in chorus; 'we will ask him.'

There are no more patient, impartial, public servants in the world than the Indian railway servants.

'Guard-Sahib, could you help us to get some drinking water?' asked the Mother.

'Oh, sorry, time's up! We're off, but I'll see to it at the next station,' he called out, as the train moved slowly past him till his van reached his side and he swung himself on.

Did the girls feel hurt at being refused water by the high-caste and Mohammedan water-carriers? Not in the least! That was the treatment which always had been meted out to their tribes. The nurse asked because the Mother asked. Had the girls been alone it would never have occurred to them to do anything but go on being thirsty in silence.

As soon as the train drew into the next station, the guard shouted to the station water-carriers to 'bring water this way, and be quick about it.' Coming up alongside he inquired: 'Anything more I can do for you?' Waving away the girls' chorus of thanks he went on, smiling and greeting people all down the train as if they were all old acquaintances. 'The travelling public,' he explained later, 'are as changeless as the names of weekdays. You may change a train, but never the public.'

Notwithstanding the fact that no one would touch the girls or give them so much as a drink of water, the 'travelling public' was intensely interested in them.

'That girl a nurse! Has she been trained? Has she parents?' All three questions being answered in the affirmative, the next barrage of queries would be: 'How can it be? How could she learn? Is she not out-caste?'

'With Jesus Christ there is no caste,' they were gently

answered, 'and all things are possible to those who believe in Him.'

'But your parents are not Christians! how can you be Christians?'

'We became Christians of ourselves.'

'How much are they paying you?'

At this question the girls would laugh outright. They knew that for whatever they had received they had given an equal return in work. The nurses received training; but the work they gave in return was quite its equal in value. Those who were teachers had also paid back in good, honest work. This was explained over and over again, always with the same ending—'but we owe it all to the wonderful love of Jesus. He first showed us our sin, then forgave us and afterwards helped us to learn what we know.'

'Sin! Yes, of course you people are sinners,' was a remark sometimes spoken outright and sometimes only inferred. To which the girls would reply as indirectly, 'Some of the things *people* call sin, *God* does not, and some of the things God calls sin, people do not. It is sin to cheat with money, as much as to take other people's goods; and to deceive with actions as well as to deceive with words. But to break caste, or marry a widow is *not* sin!'

In such words, throughout the journey, the girls continually broadcast the plan of Salvation, backed up by their own ungainsayable benefit through having become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Weeks later, the Officer wrote from the Settlement that since their visit a new awakening had come to his people. Many who had been utterly indifferent to all teaching, and almost to life itself, had been stirred into active desire to get hold of the new power they had seen displayed in the children.

CHAPTER XIX

LETTERS FROM MARY

From a Christian College for Women, India.

MOTHER DEAR,

February 16th.

I have counted up the weeks. Twenty-five more and I shall be a fully qualified Kindergarten Teacher; then where will you send me! I can hear you saying, 'Mary, dear! don't pay your bill till your grain is weighed,' but I am pretty sure of the weight of my grain. You know, Mother, I have not once failed, and the *Principal* says I shall be sure to pass.

Now I will tell you a secret. You remember the money you sent me from England? I did not need clothes, so I consulted my class-mistress, and she arranged for me to have lessons on the organ, and Mother I can play nearly all the songs in our song book! Do you remember giving me your old 'Salvation Army Music'? I gummed it and patched it, and the only songs in it that I cannot manage are a few I never heard you sing; so perhaps it will not matter if I don't master them. But I keep working at them, especially 'Promoted to Glory.' It is magnificent!

Oh! I can see it all happening: the warriors going up to the Throne, and God Himself coming with the crown in His hand, and after the Saviour had placed it on the warrior's head, all the bands in Heaven will crash out: 'Strife and Sorrow over,' as they did in Finland the night after we buried the Officer who died while we were there. Do you remember? Only the bands in Heaven—what will they be like? Dear Mother, I should like to be there to see you crowned. I am so glad to have been able to learn some music. When I come to the end of my letters I always find myself singing: 'Give me a love like Thine,' because if I had as much love as Jesus had I should be able to send you as much as I always want to. As it is, I can only write,

Your loving daughter,

MARY.

February 17th.

PS.—To-day we had a Memorial Service here for the lady who founded this College, fifty years ago—Ruth Bannerji—and I sang ‘Summoned Home’ (you know I sing alto now, don’t you?), and I could only think about you. You did give up all for Jesus when you came to live with us at our Home School, didn’t you? and some day He will crown you. I *should* like to be there first—but I also want to live a long, long life to serve my Saviour and help Him to ‘bring dear India over to our King.’

Will you let me use your organ when I come back? Won’t it be lovely when we go to our Open-Air Meetings, and the people will look and say, ‘One of *those girls*!’ Oh, I must close and run to catch the mail.

March 10th.

MOTHER DEAR,

We have had the last test before the final and I came out among the first in every subject. I know you and the girls were praying for me, for I felt supported all through the days and did not once get excited. The examiners congratulated me on my cool head; but I told them it was not my coolness, it was my mother’s and sisters’ prayers helping me. Indeed, my head was burning hot all day, and I have been in bed ever since—that is two whole days and nights. You know Betty taught us how to take temperatures, and this morning the nurse forgot her thermometer; so when she was gone I took my own temperature and it was two degrees below normal. I feel so depressed and want to cry all the time, and yet I have nothing in the world to cry about.

More next time,

Your own MARY.

March 26th.

MOTHER DEAR,

Yes, it is true I am not having lessons, as I am still on the sick list. I did not tell you this reason last week because I did not want you to give unnecessary thought to me, and I was hoping every day to go back to class. But my temperature does not get right, and the pain in my chest gets rather worse. I am feeling like Bertha used to say she did, and sometimes in the night I cry. Then when the girls come to see me in the day I feel how silly I was to cry in the night. Mother dear, pray more

for me. I am so disappointed to be out of class this last period, and it is so hard to shine like gold outwardly when inside I feel all heavy like dull lead. Has the Principal written to you? She told me she was going to. Last night I had more pain than I have ever had in my life.

Your loving daughter,

MARY.

The Principal did not write immediately, but Mary's letter took the Mother quickly to her side. One swift glance at the child's face struck a blow to the Mother's heart that shattered irreparably all her great hopes for Mary's future.

'Mary, darling,' said the Mother, 'I think you have been working too hard and will have to take a little holiday.'

'I did not work harder than the other girls. Oh, I cannot have a holiday just *now*,' replied Mary.

Gently the Mother persuaded Mary that to try a change would be best, and very reluctantly the girl agreed. Arrangements were quickly made, and Mary left the Training College amidst the cheerful calls of girls to 'Hurry up and come back'; 'I'll take notes for you'; 'I'll go through all the lessons we have while you are away, when you come back'; 'Good-bye, good-bye!'

'Mary,' said the Mother, 'stand up in the carriage and wave to them as long as you can.' With the girl gaily waving her handkerchief, and the Mother's heart heavy with the iron that had entered it, the carriage drove away from the college where 'Mary, the Untouchable' had spent three happy years. Her beautiful spirit had dominated her dormitory so effectually that often naughty, undisciplined girls were removed from other rooms and put to sleep in the next bed to hers.

'Don't you think it is a little hard on Mary to feel *obliged* to help these naughty people, in addition to her

studies ? ' the Mother asked the class mistress on one of her earlier visits.

' No,' replied the mistress, ' they have time for some play, and it is then that they get into mischief ! but for every trick a naughty girl projects, Mary will project a livelier plan. A girl came who had a mania for dressing up and frightening younger and sillier girls. We put her to sleep next to Mary. A few nights afterwards, when I went my last round at night to see that they were all in bed and turn the lights out, every one of them was lying awake with a brown and white paper duck's head on. Hanging under the gas bracket was a huge sign : ' Beware and don't disturb the duck pond,' while from every bed came sounds like the croaks of sleeping ducks. Of course I laughed, it was too ridiculous. Then they all sat up in bed and bobbed their heads, and flapped the corners of the sheets in their hands and quacked like a farmyard visited by a fox. I turned out the light and left them. The next day at breakfast the Principal announced that ' she had heard that a class mistress, in going her good-night rounds, had found in one room a pond of wild ducks instead of sleeping girls. If these ducks would come with the students to the evening meal she would be glad to preside at the pond.'

Sitting on the floor, quacking, flapping their sari ends, and bobbing their paper heads, the ' ducks ' raised a wild commotion of hilarious delight as the other girls trooped in. A few judicious words in praise of their ingenuity, a request that no one would repeat that or any similar performance without permission, and some particular words of admiration for the girl who had before caused so much trouble by dressing up to tease, turned that girl's ingenuity right in the opposite direction—a desire to amuse.

' But,' continued the teacher, ' we knew it was Mary who had suggested the game and carried it through

and kept the tiresome girl in her own room, and the Principal thanked her for it. There had been no rule against such fun ; the girls were permitted to talk till after my visit, and it was just like Mary to do a thing of that sort right under our eyes. We have never known her to do anything out of sight that she would not have done happily in the presence of any one of us.'

Mary's Sunday class in the mill district had been a constant source of joy to her. She gathered the girls together herself. At first she could not induce them to go inside the School buildings ; nothing daunted, she did in the street what she and other girls had often done in the village round the Home School. She hung her picture-roll upon a tree and began to tell a Bible story to the children, who immediately gathered round, utterly regardless of the crowd of grown-ups who also stood to listen.

This she did Sunday after Sunday till the rains began. Then with a little persuasion, and a few old picture post-cards, she got her class inside the school door. After that they came regularly, and though she had only Sunday afternoons and what pencil-ends she begged, and scraps of paper she cut from letters out of the teachers' waste-paper baskets (it was war time and paper was scarce), in three months she had some of these girls reading the First Reader.

At the end of her second year she wrote to the Mother saying, 'In our Home when girls could read the Third Reader you always gave them a Bible. Eight girls in my class can now read the Third quite correctly. Please send me eight Bibles to give them !'

It is customary in all Indian educational Institutions where girls 'live in,' for some responsible person to read all letters that are sent to the girls and by the girls. This precaution is a constant necessity in India. There are evil women who will try to get into correspondence

with bright, attractive girls, and by flattery and cajolery win their hearts and drag them into lives too awful to contemplate. From such peril girls have to be most carefully guarded. So it was through the correspondence between Mary and the Mother that the Principal came to know about the Bibles.

She sent for Mary and said: 'Why did you not ask me for the Bibles? I should be delighted to give them to you.'

'Miss-Sahiba,' said Mary, 'you have never seen our Mother's face when she gives a Bible to a boy or girl who can read it for the first time. But I have, and I wanted her to do it.'

'Tell me how her face looks,' said the Principal, with moist eyes.

'Just as it will when Jesus puts her crown on,' said the child.

Knowing nothing of this conversation, the Mother accepted happily an invitation from the Principal to be present at the Sunday School Anniversary Meeting when the Bibles were to be presented.

Proudly wearing her red jacket and Khavi sari, beating a tambourine and leading the singing of:

We shall bring dear India over to our King,
And its dying millions shall Salvation sing.

Mary marched her eight girls up the aisle of the very crowded church and on to the platform where, with the Principal and other special visitors, the Mother was sitting. She brought them to the salute with a precision that brought the people seated on the platform also to their feet. With great difficulty the Mother controlled her feelings while she presented a Bible to each of the eight girls who had passed the Third Reader test, and a New Testament to ten others who had failed. As Mary turned her little troop and marched them back singing,

‘Oh, the day of victory’s coming, is coming by and by,’ some one on the platform remarked, ‘What a life of victory Mary lives.’

Other teachers brought up their classes ; but the class Mary had herself gathered together from the street was the biggest ; and her girls not only received the Bibles, which were extra awards for learning to read, but prizes for most regular attendance as well !

CHAPTER XX

WHAT OUR FATHER DOES IS WELL

VERY few words had passed between the Mother and the Principal of the College when Mary was taken away. They were experienced women, and both had seen the tragedy that threatened the girl enacted more often than they could endure to recall.

‘We will conserve her influence as long as possible, and keep her place open till we know . . .’ The Principal stopped short.

‘I will write when there is anything to write about,’ said the Mother, and the two women shook hands and parted.

‘Mother, I shall be sure to fail if I don’t soon go back,’ said Mary about ten days later.

‘I’m not worried at all about whether you fail or pass. A few weeks more or less won’t make any difference to your teaching ability ; but I should be glad if you could get well enough to take over our Kindergarten Class next term,’ said the Mother.

The thought of staying at Home and doing what she had so long desired to do lifted Mary’s spirits, and made her so cheerful that the Mother began to think of her recovery, till one day the doctor said definitely : ‘The only hope now is the Sanatorium. In any case she ought not to be where there are other children.’

Shut in her own room after the verdict, for twelve hours the Mother did battle with her shattered hopes. Mary, one of the brightest of all her girls, and one of the

most spiritual, and one who had so much to give to God and India. Mary, who already knew so well how to value her gifts and to give them cheerfully and graciously, with her voice like a seraph's, and her music, and three languages at her command. Mary was to go ! The moonless, starless night outside, where the monsoon winds howled and dashed torrential rains against the house, was not darker or more storm tossed than the Mother's soul as the long hours passed.

We're sure to finish well,
We're sure to finish well ;
If you and I are good and true,
We're sure to finish well.

We're sure to finish well,
We're sure to finish well ;
We mean to fight and conquer,
We're sure to finish well,

sang Mary cheerfully to herself in her room next to the Mother's, as she rose to greet the smiling dawn. The rains had ceased, the winds had sunk, a soothing calm and the rising sun made the morning a foretaste of the Paradise of God.

The Mother rose from her knees. Swallowing her sobs she exclaimed to herself : ' What I have taught the girls I must now actively believe—the Lord *knows* what is best for us all, even for Mary.'

She went in, all smiles, to her young patient.

' Your singing sounded cheerful. Are you feeling better ? '

' I shall be all right as soon as this pain is gone ; but only that little sing made me begin to cough,' replied Mary.

Later in the day the Mother tenderly told her what the doctor had said.

At the mention of the word ' sanatorium ' Mary burst

into uncontrollable weeping, sobbing out at intervals :
 'No one ever comes back ! No one ever comes back !'

To the Mother's assurances that some patients did recover her only reply was : 'No, they never do ! All the girls say so.'

'Mary, dear,' said the Mother, 'there are different forms of this sickness. It is quite true that some never can be cured. Now if you knew you had one that could not, and that you would soon be in Heaven, what would you like to do ?'

'Is it true of me, Mother ?' asked this bright girl of seventeen years.

The Mother did not reply immediately. It was too hard a task. When she could speak she said : 'Mary, what our Father does is well. Let us sing it to help ourselves to believe it more.'

They sang the verse, Mary putting in her pretty alto :

What our Father does is well,
 Shall the wilful heart rebel ;
 If a blessing He withhold,
 In the field or in the fold ?
 Is He not Himself to be
 Our All in all eternally ?

'I'm not afraid, Mother, but I'm so disappointed. I wanted to live and give a long life to Jesus,' said the girl, choking with suppressed emotion.

'He knows it, Mary, and if He gives you an appointment that we did not plan for, it must be best. Let us plan for the next few weeks only, and leave the afterwards to Him.'

'Mother,' said the brave girl, with tears falling like rain, 'I will go to the Sanatorium. I know many girls are unhappy there. I have often heard the girls at college talk about it. Perhaps I can help them to get saved, and then they will be happier.'

A few days later Mary took a cheerful leave of the

only Home she had ever known. To her it had been a very happy one. Not by one word or look did she reveal to any of the girls her dread secret. Girls had gone to hospital before and come back rosy and well, and so the others looked on Mary as only an ordinary hospital case.

A few days after she had left Mary in the Sanatorium, the Mother received the following letter :

MOTHER DEAR,

If I said I liked being here it would be most untrue. There are ten girls on this veranda, and nearly all are worse than I am, and we have no night nurse. The doctor says I must not get out of bed ; but how can I help it when in the night the girls are dying and are afraid ? Every night I get up and pray with some of them. When they wake up and feel bad, they call out : ‘ Little Sister, come and pray with me.’ Mother dear, I am very happy to go and pray with them, and always feel Jesus is close beside me. Several girls have got saved. Last night a girl was in great pain. I was holding her hands and with my eyes closed asking Jesus to take her pain away, and He came and took her spirit away. I felt such a strange change come into her hand and stopped praying to look at her, and she was dead.

Mother dear, I do want to see you. I know it is a long way, but I want to see you so badly.

MARY.

How unconscious she was of the wonderful way in which God was using her last weeks of life. Little did this ‘untouchable’ know that in her few short years she had done more for her beloved Lord than thousands of His followers whom He had loaded with benefits had done in long lives.

The Mother could not resist her appeal, and seeing on arrival that Mary’s life was only a matter of days, she asked the doctor’s permission to take her home.

It was rumoured along the ward that Mary was going away. A wail of grief broke out from those remaining. ‘ Who will read the words of comfort to us ? ’ ‘ Who will pray with us when we die in the night ? ’ cried out one after the other.

'What is this?' asked the doctor, and for the first times she learned what had gone on in the lonely nights of anguish. In her three weeks' stay Mary had stood by eleven souls and prayed with them as they passed out of this world into the next. Eight others still in the dormitory claimed that Mary had led them to Jesus. Now she was going away.

'The sunshine is all gone, the night is come,' exclaimed a girl despairingly as the Mother bore Mary away in her arms.

'There is not enough staff. I know it. I know it!' groaned the doctor, 'but what can I do? Where are the people the Lord is always urging to "Come over and help us"?''

'Yes,' said the Mother, breathless with carrying her precious burden, 'the Lord must still be always asking, "Where are the nine?"'

The difficult journey home was made almost easy through the generous help of two British soldiers traveling in the same direction. Carefully they carried Mary's light body from platform to platform when changes had to be made, and secured water and ice and fruit for her at the different stations. No two big brothers could have shown more devotion to a loved little sister than these two stalwart Englishmen did to Mary on her last trying railway journey.

'Good-bye, I shall soon be in Heaven, and then I'll tell Jesus how kind you have been to me,' she said, as they shook hands with her at the end.

'Sister, sign this, will you please,' said one of them holding out a sheet of paper to the Mother. 'Cannot help what happens, only we'd like the O.C. to know we are speaking the truth, that's all,' he added with a smile. The Mother took the paper and read:

'Reason for being late: went ten hours' journey out of our way to help a Salvation Army lady to take a

dying girl home ; she did not know it till we asked her to sign this paper.'

The Mother signed the paper, and referred the O.C. to the district magistrate, who knew both the Mother and Mary.

Afterwards the soldiers wrote that they were only reprimanded for being absent without leave, and that they would have gladly taken that mild punishment a dozen times for the real joy it had been to serve 'that sweet little angel.'

Few days were left. Increasing weakness came with every new morning till at last the sanctified soul of one more 'Untouchable' went into the presence of the King, and all the Bands of Heaven played for Mary :

Strife and sorrow over,
The Lord's true faithful Soldier
Has been called to go from the ranks below
To the conquering hosts above ! *

* From 'Promoted to Glory,' an Army Funeral Song.

CHAPTER XXI

LIGHTS SHINING IN DARK PLACES

ONE by one the girls in the Home joined the active forces of The Army of the Lord. From being in the eyes of millions of their countrymen little more than a useful kind of semi-intelligent animal, they had become women, filled with wisdom and knowledge, also the ability to do very many things that even the intelligent Indian women living all around them had never considered possible for themselves.

Thus they became Salvation Army Officers, Dispensers, Teachers, Nurses.

The designation of 'Teacher' includes many different kinds of instructors. 'My daughters have heard from the menials of my house that your girls can read,' said a wealthy landowner to the Mother, 'and they are bothering me to ask you to send a girl to teach them to read. Could you spare one?'

'Yes, perhaps. But, Sahibjee, your girls are Moham-medans and mine are Christians,' said the Mother.

The landowner tilted his black-fezzed head on one side and looked thoughtful for a few seconds. Then he replied: 'I fear I must risk the consequences of that. Our women folk have become so restless. In the newspapers we read of the "unrest" in the country; it is nothing to the unrest in our Zenanas. I will try what allowing them to read will do.'

'You are very wise, I think,' replied the Mother, 'but

why do you not call a Mussulmani? * Introducing Christianity into your home will not bring peace.'

'You are unkind to make that remark, Miss-Sahiba,' replied the landowner. 'You must know that is the arrow in my heart. I must allow my girls to learn to read; there are *no* Mussulmani teachers available, and your Christian teachers are on the spot.'

'Sahibjee,' said the Mother earnestly, 'why do you not begin to inquire for yourself about the purpose of the life and death of Jesus Christ? Lift up your eyes and see the fields of the whole earth ripening white for the sickles of Jesus Christ. See the ripening grain close to your own house, and you yourself opening your door for the sowers to enter with the seed. I will happily let the girls come to you, but do not you say afterwards that they sowed the seed surreptitiously while you thought they were only teaching letters. They may teach reading and writing; they *must* teach the good news of Jesus Christ.'

'I will consider the matter,' he replied.

A few days later there came a courteous letter, enclosing a generous gift of money and a request that teachers might be sent daily, with sufficient books and pencils to teach five girls and three women to read and write.

The books, including eight New Testaments and eight story books, were ordered and sent to the house direct. A few days later, two once 'Untouchable' girls entered the home of the proud, wealthy Mohammedan landowner as teachers to his daughters and his sons' wives.

Often had these girls prayed: 'Lord, help us to shine as lights in dark places for Thee.' *Surely* their prayer was beginning to be answered!

* A Mohammedan lady.

Some months had passed.

'Pardon me, but is that The Salvation Army uniform which you are wearing?' asked an English gentleman who had been the British resident at the court of an Indian Prince.

'Yes!' replied the Mother. 'Have you met any of our people before?'

'Well, yes! I suppose I have. That is the dress which two girls were wearing at the court. I couldn't make them out. They were said to be nurses, and they always went and came in that colour. I thought they were some sort of Hindus, although all the court officials said they were Christians.

'Well!' he continued cheerfully, 'from your point of view they gave a very good account of themselves. Influenza was raging through the court, and we telegraphed everywhere for nurses. The only competent people we could get were these two, and they had still to complete a month of their training, and were Christians. I was rather relieved when I saw the colour of their clothes. I thought they belonged to a Hindu sect, for I knew how prejudiced some of the ladies were against Christianity. But the girls won.'

'Are there any Christian converts inside the court yet?' asked the Mother.

'I couldn't say yes or no to that question, but the whole attitude of the court is changed, and a lady from a Zenana Mission is now coming regularly to teach the Bible to the ladies.'

The Mother had heard the same story from the girls themselves. When the urgent call came to the hospital where they were in training, she had given her consent to their going to the court on condition that they wore Salvation Army uniform. The girls claimed that several of their patients had got saved, and died gloriously happy as a consequence. It was with some difficulty that the

hospital authorities got the girls away after the epidemic had passed, they had grown to be so popular. They, '*the Untouchables*,' carried the Light to that Hindu court; and it has never since been entirely dark.

While this story was being written, a hospital for women was being built in the Capital of that State. This hospital is now opened, staffed with Christian doctors and nurses.

Other doors opened, other avenues of service became accessible, as yearly a growing number of girls became ready; all setting in motion new forces and creating material for endless story books.

Are these girls exceptional? Not in the least!

Among India's two thousand five hundred Officers are now many men and women who were once called '*Untouchables*' (even though they were not of the '*Criminal Tribes*'). Apart from The Army, they would never have come into their present wide opportunities.

Oh! let us value our Organization at its true worth; our uniform for all it stands for everywhere; our discipline, without which we could not be the mighty force we are. With cheerful courage let us take our opportunities as they come, and fill up our lives with joyful service for our Redeemer in the wonderful Organization He has created for the Salvation of all the world.

Has this book, falling into the hands of Young People inside and outside of The Salvation Army, opened the eyes of some to a career of usefulness of which hitherto they had not thought? Consider it well. It may be that God is offering to you one of His greatest gifts—an immeasurable opportunity for laying up treasure in Heaven. What a gift! What a calling! and '*the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*'



The doors of Salvation Army Training Garrisons are wonderful. They swing inward annually to receive and train for the service of Jesus Christ and the people a living stream of young men and women of many nationalities, and from every walk in life. Often, from having been known to only a tiny circle of friends

and acquaintances, when their training is over they pass out equipped, and ready to go wherever God leads them ; to ' follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth ' ; to become His leaders in a thousand battles.

Jesus, at Thy feet I'm sitting,
 In Thy pastures green I rest,
 Day by day by Thy still waters,
 I am safe and I am blest.
 Jesus, in Thy tender mercy
 Look on Asia's wandering lambs,
 Lost and bleating o'er the mountains
 Dying on the scorching sands.

Jesus, in Thy love and pity
 Lead those lambs, so sore distressed,
 Cold and dying for life's waters
 To these pastures green for rest.
 Jesus ! did I hear Thee saying,
 ' Go thyself and feed My lambs,
 Take thyself the living waters
 To those barren thirsty lands ' ?

Jesus, at Thy feet I'm kneeling,
 I am sad and sore opprest,
 Should I go myself and lead them
 To Thy pastures green for rest ?
 Jesus, are there those already
 Lost while I am sitting here ?
 Oh, forgive and sanctify me.
 I have heard ! Thy voice is clear !
 And I go.

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